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DYNAMIC TENSION

VIRGINIA I. POSTREL

Bovine growth hormone. Japanese cars. Gay marriages. Corporate restructuring. Food irradiation. Breast implants. Mobile phones. Temporary workers. Plastic grocery bags. Rock videos. Surrogate motherhood. Aseptic juice boxes. Salvadoran nannies. Indian surgeons. Ethiopian cab drivers.

From the cows to the cabbies, they all create controversy. They're new. They're different. And they're deeply politicized.

Today, our political culture stands divided between dynamic and static visions of the good society. On one side are those who see civilization as an ever-evolving process of discovery and who seek to preserve the liberal institutions that make that process possible. On the other side are those who envision a single best order for society and who seek to alter current culture—often radically—to achieve and conserve an unchanging end state.

Most people, and certainly most politicians, don't yet recognize the divisions, which are still masked by Cold War alliances. That's one reason this election season seems so odd, so frustrating, and so empty. Neither George Bush nor Bill Clinton speaks to the issues. Both seek to straddle the divide. Both lead fractious coalitions that encompass representatives of both camps.

Those rare politicians who do elicit strong public reactions—positive and negative—tend to be people whose visions and attitudes are clearly defined, even if their policies are inconsistent. Pat Buchanan, for instance, supports cultural stasis. Jack Kemp supports economic dynamism. Searching for political allies and intellectual soulmates, each has gradually expanded his vision beyond its original arena. Buchanan now supports economic protectionism, a static policy. Kemp advocates social tolerance.

The collision of static and dynamic visions is most obvious in the struggle to protect technical innovation from antitechnology greens. The ideology of "sustainability" requires a "steady-state" economy in which self-sufficiency replaces specialization and geographic isolation supplants trade. The goal is to slow down change and, ultimately, to end it.

So if genetic engineering cures diseases, if irradiation keeps food fresh, if the juice box replaces the Thermos, stasis supporters seek to stop the change, preferably by law. Since every change, indeed every choice, entails risk, anyone can easily find fault with any innovation, often fault enough to block regulatory permissions. The result is a legal bias against the new, a squelching of the experimental.

One man's stagnation is another man's utopia. Some California air regulators are delighted with the state's economic slump. It's a lot easier to meet traffic-reduction targets when people are leaving the state. Bureaucrats are pleased. So are the environmentalists who spent the '80s campaigning against growth.

The conflict of visions extends beyond environmental disputes, however, to every sphere of human endeavor. Each vision encompasses not merely some policy prescriptions but an entire world view.

Stasis is utopia—whether the environmentalists' Eden or Ozzie and Harriet's America. It is planning—the old-time Progressives' rational order. It is control—the protectionist paradise of big business and big labor, of growth without change.

Dynamism, by contrast, is continuous improvement, discovery, adaptation. It is "muddling through" environmental problems with cleaner fuels or better materials. It is "experiments in living," through which family life adjusts to a world in which women have education and contraception. It is market competition and diversity of enterprise.

Dynamism doesn't promise perfection. Experiments, by their nature, often fail. Dynamism is deeply historical; it understands that the past was different from the present and that the future will be different still. Dynamism seeks to learn, while stasis claims to know. Stasis divides and conquers. Dynamism lets a thousand flowers bloom.

Stasis is an end. Dynamism is a means. And that means is the heart of our culture. It is both liberty's product and its rationale.

Proponents of stasis are cultural revolutionaries. They seek change, radical change, to achieve their picture of the good. But once captured, that picture becomes a still photograph. It does not move.

Consider this year's leading culture warriors. Pat Buchanan says we're in the midst of a "religious war" requiring "force, rooted in justice, and backed by courage," to "take back our cities, and take back our culture, and take back our country."

Meanwhile, Al Gore says we need a new "central organizing principle" to subordinate every aspect of life to his environmental vision. He calls for "struggle, sacrifice, and a wrenching transformation of society." He equates American materialism with Nazi totalitarianism. He, too, declares a culture war.

Buchanan and Gore are political enemies. But they stand on the same side of the great divide. Both crave a static utopia, to be achieved by drastic action. Both see adaptation as appeasement, tolerance as treason.

Both Buchanan and Gore want stasis, but neither wants to live in the other's utopia. And the political weakness of stasis is just this: Its adherents seek mutually exclusive static worlds.

Dynamism, by contrast, can accommodate competing ideas of the good life. It provides a framework under which many people can test different hypotheses about everything from which fashions will sell to what religion best provides spiritual meaning.

A dynamic society also encourages people to discover new ways of sheltering themselves from its very turmoil. Commodities traders develop hedging strategies; insurance spreads risk; families, churches, and ethnic communities create anchors of stability. (Hence, for instance, the great strength of religious havens in immigrant communities, where individuals have uprooted themselves from their homelands.)

Dynamism does not, however, accommodate everything. It does not, cannot, enforce uniformity. It permits the imposition of mores but also allows for their evolution. It is the product of liberalism.

"The liberal position," wrote F. A. Hayek in *The Constitution of Liberty*, "is based on courage and confidence, on a preparedness to let change run its course even if we cannot predict where it will lead....[C]onservatives are inclined to use the powers of government to prevent change or to limit its rate to whatever appeals to the more timid mind. In looking forward, they lack the faith in the spontaneous forces of adjustment which makes the liberal accept changes without apprehension, even though he does not know how the necessary adaptations will be brought about."

But just as "change" supporters may in fact be utopian reactionaries seeking to impose stasis, dynamism's proponents may seem quite conservative. A dynamic system requires four freedoms: freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of contract, and property rights. To conceive and communicate ideas, to carve out spheres of experimentation, to make commitments and plans, these freedoms are essential. And their existence, by unleashing individual choice, creates a dynamic society.

For civilization to evolve, for adaptation to take place, these freedoms must be conserved. The process, not a particular result, is the point. Liberty and dynamism are not identical, but they are interdependent.

In the real world of politics, of course, most people lack "the vision thing." Few advocate anything definitely recognizable as either stasis or dynamism.

Given our current political culture, that means a sort of stasis wins—not the rarified stasis of Jeremy Rifkin or Russell Kirk, a coherent ideological vision, but the mundane stasis of regulatory gridlock. This is what Milton and Rose Friedman call "the tyranny of the status quo" or what *National Journal*'s Jonathan Rauch, drawing on the work of economist Mancur Olson, recently dubbed "demosclerosis." Established interest groups block both governmental reform and economic innovation. Often they block both simultaneously.

Writes Rauch: "No one starting anew today would think to subsidize wool farmers, banish banks from the mutual fund business, forbid United Parcel Service to deliver letters, grant massive tax breaks for borrowing. Countless policies are on the books not because they make sense in 1992, but merely because they cannot be gotten rid of. They are dinosaurs that will not die. In a Darwinian sense, the universe of federal policies is ceasing to evolve."

Nowhere is bureaucratic stasis more obvious than in the regulation of telecommunications. There are too many interest groups—phone companies, cable monopolies, broadcasters, cable networks, movie studios, equipment manufacturers, mobile phone companies, newspaper publishers, even electric utilities—and too much political intervention. Insiders block outsiders and everyone squeezes consumers.

The result is "anti-industrial policy," as Robert Samuelson described it in a recent column focusing on a tiny corner of the mess, a dispute over mobile-phone frequencies. In one of the most technically innovative industries in the world, stasis predominates.

This trend, which is by no means confined to telecommunications, threatens the experimental nature of capitalism itself. Notes economist Nathan Rosenberg, "Historically, one of the most distinctive features of capitalist economies has been the practice of decentralizing authority over investments to substantial numbers of individuals who stand to make large personal gains if their decisions are right, who stand to lose heavily if their decisions are wrong, and *who lack the economic or political power to prevent at least some others from proving them wrong.*" (Italics in the original.)

In today's politics, self-interested protectionists and static ideologues feed off each other. So, for instance, Rifkin opposes bovine growth hormone because it is unnatural, the product of genetic engineering. But regulatory approvals are on hold not because Rifkin hates technology but because dairy farmers, fearing greater milk supplies and lower prices, raised a ruckus.

Despite the pull of stasis, there is still a strong constituency for what Hayek called "the party of life, the party that favors free growth and spontaneous evolution." The American spirit favors dynamism. The human spirit does as well.

Most people like freedom. They like to order their lives by their own lights. They like to create new businesses, new products, new social arrangements. They don't want to enlist in culture wars.

People know what they like. But they don't understand how to protect it. We don't see immigrants forming coalitions with biotech companies or mobile-phone entrepreneurs allying with surrogate mothers. Until those coalitions begin to form, until the party of life, the party of dynamism, articulates its interests and defends free institutions, American politics will continue to seem irrelevant and confused.

JUST SAY MO' MONEY

JACOB SULLUM

Three years after George Bush waved a baggie of crack at the American people and declared war on a group of chemical compounds, Sen. Joseph Biden, the Delaware Democrat who chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee, has issued a report that opens with a startling declaration: "The President's drug control strategy must be evaluated against the only goal that matters—winning the war on drugs."

The idea of judging a policy by its success may seem like common sense to you, but in Washington this is still a revelation. "*Are we making sufficient progress in reducing drug abuse, ending drug crime, and eliminating the drug supply?*" Biden asks.

You can probably guess his answer. A more interesting question: What, exactly, is "sufficient progress"? How do we know when we've won the war on drugs?

The 194-page report from the Senate Judiciary Committee does not address that question. Instead, it argues that Bush's drug war has largely been a failure. The problem is, the Democrats don't understand why. And the evidence of failure they offer is often false, misleading, or ambiguous.

For example, the report refers repeatedly to "900,000 drug-damaged babies" allegedly born in the last three years. No source is cited for this number, but it seems to be based on the assumption that every baby exposed to illegal drugs in the womb suffers harm as a result. Yet the Department of Health and Human Services says more than two-thirds of such babies show no ill effects at birth. The report implies that in-utero exposure causes learning disabilities later in life, but the National Institute on Drug Abuse notes that there's no good evidence of such long-term effects.

Biden and his fellow Democrats also exaggerate the extent of drug addiction, counting as "hard-core addicts" people who use cocaine once a week or even once a month. They assert that Americans who so much as try cocaine or heroin "are on their way to becoming hard-core addicts." And they say drug overdoses are "the inevitable result of hard-core addiction." By this sort of reasoning, every user of cocaine or heroin will eventually drop dead of an overdose.

But the Democrats want to have it both ways: When they're trying to show how terrible illegal drugs are, they deny the distinction between use and abuse, questioning the very notion of "casual" (don't forget the scare quotes) drug consumption. When they're trying to show that Bush is losing the drug war, they note that "the decline in overall drug use is due almost entirely to the reduction in the number of *casual drug abusers*." Meanwhile, the "entrenched hard-core addict problem" remains.

Similarly, bigger seizures of illegal drugs are either "major successes" (page 117) or "the unmistakable signs of a looming epidemic" (page 8). An increasing number of murders—24,700 in 1991, the "greatest murder toll in the nation's history"—may indicate failure, as the Democrats argue, or increased disputes and competition among dealers resulting from an effective crackdown, as the Office of National Drug Control Policy has suggested.

In the end, the Democrats abandon all talk of measuring success in favor of something they understand better: money. They praise the Bush administration for requesting it, brag about giving more than was asked, and complain that not enough has been spent. They want *more* money—money for drug interdiction and eradication; money for drug treatment programs; money for antidrug propaganda; money for state and local drug-law enforcement; money to build new prisons; money to hire DEA, FBI, IRS, and Border Patrol agents.

The report offers no evidence that this spending is likely to accomplish anything positive, and there's ample reason to believe it won't. For example, a recent review commissioned by Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Crime and Criminal Justice, concludes that government studies of U.S. interdiction and eradication efforts "raise serious doubts about whether any feasible supply-reduction activities can produce a sustained impact on cocaine consumption in the United States."

Calls for more "treatment" may seem less objectionable, but the term is deceptive. Drug treatment differs from most kinds of medical therapy in at least two important ways: It works in only a small minority of cases, and it is imposed on the "patients" whether they want it or not. (Biden would present government-defined "hard-core addicts" with "one of two stark choices—get into treatment, or go to jail and get treatment there.")

Biden wants to hire more cops to arrest drug offenders and build more prisons to put them in. Yet the United States already has the highest incarceration rate in the Western world, with more than 1 million people behind bars. If Biden is serious about forcing drug users into treatment, we will need cells to accommodate many millions more.

The Democrats' "alternative" to the war on drugs, as always, is a bigger war on drugs. Yet their catalog of failures suggests that there might be something wrong with this whole approach. Trying to implicate George Bush, Biden writes, "The failure of a $32 billion drug war cannot be blamed on its foot soldiers." Nor can it be blamed on a lack of money.

Rather, the failure is inevitable. No matter how progress is defined, it will never be sufficient, because the government's avowed goal—"a drug-free America"—is impossible to reach. The war on drugs is a civil war between Americans who consider certain substances to be inherently evil and Americans who like to use those substances. It will therefore continue, in one form or another, as long as people have chemical prejudices and the power to impose them on others.

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

RICK HENDERSON

Bill Clinton's supporters compare the Arkansas governor to Jack Kennedy. His detractors say Clinton's libidinous, all right, but as a policy maker he more closely resembles Michael Dukakis. Partisan bickering aside, there is a chief executive with whom Clinton shares striking similarities: California Gov. Pete Wilson, who recently survived his second consecutive budget crisis.

Compare Wilson's 1990 campaign to Clinton's. Both candidates are tough on crime, liberal on social issues, and as green as the Sierra Club. Despite facing big budget deficits, each proposes an aggressive legislative agenda highlighted by expensive programs for children. Both disparage bureaucracy but not regulations. And both run against the prevailing images of their parties—Wilson against the tax-cutting social conservatives of Orange County, Clinton against the special interests that keep Democrats from winning the White House.

Pete Wilson won in 1990 but has had little opportunity to implement his ambitious agenda. A $55-billion budget that was supposed to be $500 million in the red on election day was nearly $15 billion short four months later. To balance his budget, Wilson raised taxes by $8 billion and relied mostly on accounting gimmicks and inflated revenue projections to do the rest.

As soon as the 1991 budget fiasco was over, this year's crisis began. It ended this September, after the California government operated for more than 60 days on IOUs.

To his credit, this time Wilson refused to allow general tax increases and held education spending in line with inflation. He also cut the state's fairly generous welfare benefits and increased the fees paid by well-subsidized college students.

The state will continue to have long-term troubles maintaining a generous welfare state, but Wilson learned how to read a calendar: Unpopular legislators must face voters this November, two years before they decide Wilson's fate.

Wilson discovered that, as he faced a crisis, he had to rely on an ideology and stick with it; competent management wasn't enough. He chose fiscal conservatism, which (his critics claim) doesn't accurately reflect his temperament. But even if Wilson doesn't make a credible Reaganite, his new-found conservatism has enhanced his reputation as a chief executive.

When Bill Clinton faces a fiscal crisis, and he will, he will have to find his ideological moorings. He could embrace the entrepreneurial vision of David Osborne and the Progressive Policy Institute. Clinton articulately supports welfare reform. The PPI vision would also suggest establishing partnerships with private investors to build roads, bridges, and airports, and leasing some existing government facilities to entrepreneurs. Clinton could thus boost infrastructure investment without tapping taxpayers.

Much of Clinton's rhetoric, however, suggests he would turn left. He already endorses new payroll taxes to fund national health insurance. And his agenda relies on mandates, which hide the cost of government services by forcing businesses to provide them. Family leave and worker retraining are but two examples.

His key economic advisers oppose deregulation. One, Robert Reich, believes infrastructure privatization has gone too far; another, Derek Shearer, was the architect of Santa Monica's tough rent-control laws. His vice president, Al Gore, advocates draconian environmental policies.

As a candidate, Bill Clinton can get away with pandering. But if he wins the election, he'll find (as did Pete Wilson) that governing requires making tough choices. The direction his ideological compass points will say much about how intrusive the federal government would become under President Clinton.

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LETTERS

Not by Bread Alone

Brink Lindsey undertook the considerable task of finding personal fulfillment in capitalism ("Personal Best," July). As the article states, there is challenge to be found on "every level" of free capitalist business. But that point begs the question of whether such competition is personally fulfilling.

The fact that something is challenging does not mean that its completion is fulfilling. For many secretaries, it is a challenge to maintain composure in the face of degradation. The average executive is "challenged" by a mountain of paperwork drudgery daily; its elimination is more depressing than rewarding, as she knows that it will only be replaced by a similar pile the next day.

Lindsey's examples of fulfillment through capitalism are valid enough, but they are hardly common. Mundane and unrewarding "challenges" are far more numerous, and it is simple statistical distortion to lump them in with "rewarding challenges" only because they are "challenging."

What constitutes a meaningful challenge is different for every person. It is absurd to assume that any one system, even one as broad and undifferentiated as "capitalism," holds the key to personal fulfillment for everyone. While capitalism is certainly no worse than any other "ism" in terms of providing "Maslovian meaning," I am hard pressed to find it superior in any respect.

Andrew D. Melnick
New Orleans, LA

I WAS DISTURBED that Brink Lindsey felt he had to apologize for fast-food restaurants, shopping malls, tabloids, and "so on ad nauseam." I shudder to think what life was like in the 1300s for the poor. What would the people who now eat at McDonald's, shop at K-Mart, and read the *National Enquirer* have had to do for food, necessities, and entertainment back then? Does Mr. Lindsey himself not fall into the trap of romanticizing the feudal period when he criticizes "obsessive materialism and crass commercialism"?

And why is capitalism responsible for the "darker and dangerous side" of "commercial ambition"? Our society produces George Babbitts not because of capitalism, but because it has been stifling individualism and independent thought for most of this century. Capitalism provides individuals with freedom to provide for their own welfare. Teaching them ethics, self-esteem, and the meaning of life is the job of philosophers, not economists.

James Wm. Clement
Ithaca, NY

BRINK LINDSEY BUILDS on Abraham Maslow's concept of "self-actualization." Yet Maslow clearly identified the needs Lindsey describes as "esteem needs," not the higher self-actualization needs. Professional success matters little if one longs to be a poet or a musician. One "must be true to his own nature," Maslow wrote. He rejects as a failed "myth" the theory of "the Economic Man," that under capitalism, "individual happiness and welfare would be sure to result," instead calling for "the psychologically healthy man."

Lindsey also invokes Alexis de Tocqueville. While Tocqueville acknowledged the justness of a free society, he feared its spiritual consequences. He writes of the challenges extolled by Lind-

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sey that, "while man takes delight in this proper and legitimate quest for prosperity, there is a danger that in the end he may lose the use of his sublimest faculties and that, bent on improving everything around him, he may at length degrade himself....Therefore it is ever the duty of lawgivers and of all upright educated men to raise up the souls of their fellow citizens and turn their attention towards heaven."

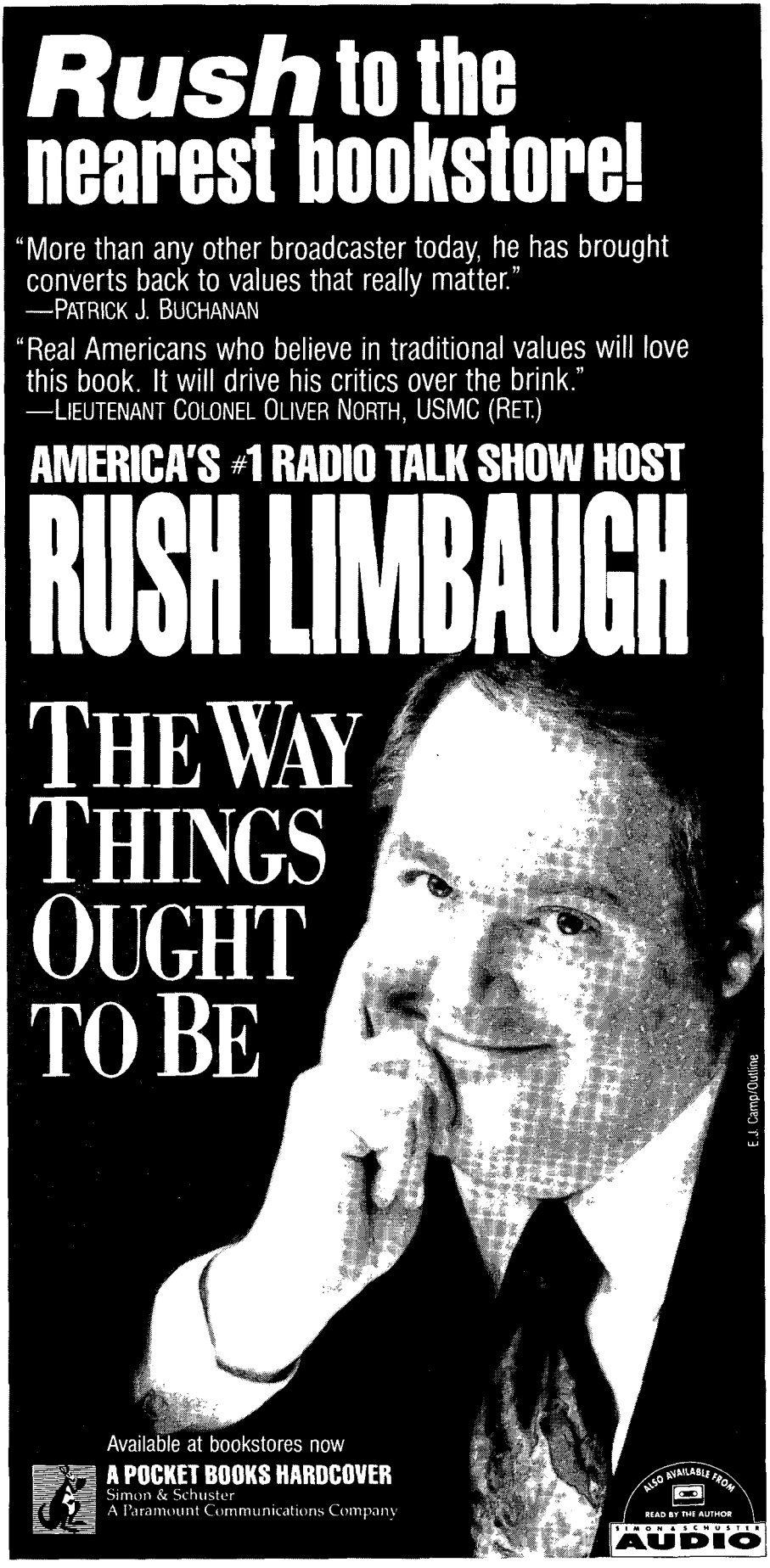
Lindsey's thesis that free-market challenges satisfy "spiritual needs" only underscores his peculiar concept of the spiritual, a perspective not shared by most of the authors he cites. I too have savored the satisfaction of creating a complex computer program, as Lindsey describes, but the experience taught me nothing about purpose and virtue.

The Greek philosophers advised us to seek the good by pursuing truth, beauty, and justice. Capitalism leads us to seek profit, replacing the classic virtues with advertising, allure, and market share. This leaves most in a spiritual void, if not outright disgust. They stay whole only through truly spiritual pursuits such as philosophy, religion, and art. I support capitalism, but I don't entertain fanciful notions about its "spiritual" benefits.

Stuart Reges
Washington, DC

Mr. Lindsey replies: The correspondents let me have it from both sides. James Clement is upset that I lay crassness and Babbittry at capitalism's doorstep. Meanwhile, Andrew Melnick and Stuart Reges scoff at the idea that there is anything uplifting and spiritual about life in commercial society. Though it's not familiar territory, I think I'll stay in the mushy middle. Capitalism, neither paradise nor hell, is an imperfect social order that nonetheless is superior to any known alternative.

Mr. Clement argues that miserable peasants of the 1300s wouldn't be so contemptuous of fast food, shopping malls, etc. But the issue isn't whether we should go back to the 14th century; it's whether we can make contemporary society, with all its blessings, a little less vulgar and mindless.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Mr. Melnick points out that not all job-related challenges are rewarding challenges. That is true, but it is also true that not every moment in the day need be nirvana for you to consider your job, on the whole, fulfilling. Even people who love their work are undoubtedly familiar with tedium and stress, conflict and frustration.

That said, I admitted in my article that "fulfillment on the job is by no means universal, and may even be the exception rather than the rule." My modest point is only that capitalism—through the extravagant variety of jobs it creates and the ever-growing premium it places on creativity—offers the mass of people better opportunities to find challenging and rewarding work than either the traditional village economy it replaced or the socialist economy that tried and failed to replace it.

I explicitly based my discussion of self-actualization on Charles Murray's interpretation of Maslow, as opposed to Maslow's actual writings. Nonetheless, Maslow wrote that "self-actualization means experiencing fully, vividly, selflessly, with full concentration and total absorption." That captures perfectly what I meant by fulfilling work: work that (for some sufficient part of the time) you find so intrinsically enjoyable that you "lose yourself" in it.

Of course Tocqueville warned against the dangers of shallowness and pettiness under democratic capitalism; passages such as the one Mr. Reges cites can be found throughout *Democracy in America*, and on almost every page of volume two. While Tocqueville spoke out forcefully and eloquently about the free society's characteristic vices, it is clear to any careful reader that he believed freedom's virtues outweighed those vices. Of the ethos of a free society, he said: "Some individuals it lowers, but mankind it raises." Tocqueville saw the free society as an advance, albeit a problematic one, in the development of the human spirit.

Finally, it is Mr. Reges who has the peculiar, and impoverished, conception of the spiritual. For him the only "truly spiritual pursuits" are such things as philosophy, religion, and art; outside the Platonic academy, apparently, there is only a "spiritual void." In other words, Mr. Reges can find no place for the spiritual in everyday life, in the life of family and work. To which I can only say: too bad for Mr. Reges.

Review of the Reviewer

Jacob Sullum is that rarest gem among book reviewers: one who is willing to give a fair reading to a book whose conclusions he does not endorse. His thoughtful review of my book *Against Excess* ("Bringing Up the Middle," July) is a model of open-mindedness, careful reading, and well-reasoned criticism. It also has the unusual virtue of giving its reader some notion of the tone and content of the book under review. Many thanks.

Mark Kleiman
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA

Telling Secrets

I was deeply saddened to read Ruth Shalit's unkind attack on rape survivors and their advocates ("Radical Exhibitionists," July). By demeaning rape survivors who tell their stories as "crowd-pleasing exhibitionists," Ms. Shalit will shame women into silence, fear, and pain.

Ms. Shalit discusses one incident of a college student who later recanted a story she told at a Take Back the Night march. She then leaps to the dangerous conclusion that the phenomenon of telling itself is suspect. First, it is unclear why the Princeton student who initially told a detailed story of a brutal rape in a supportive environment later recanted after secret meetings with school officials. We know only that, facing a formal complaint from the alleged perpetrator and the dean of students' view that she had "compromised" the student's "reputation in the community," the woman recanted. Perhaps her story was true. Perhaps not. But this issue has nothing to do with the importance of survivors' telling their stories.

Most rape victims suffer alone in silence, believing that they are responsible, that no one will believe them, that they will not be protected. They struggle to live with their secrets. Secrecy causes them psychological anguish, compounding and complicating their original injuries. Sometimes secrecy becomes too great to bear. If she cannot tell anyone what happened to her, the rape victim will lapse into severe depression, anxiety, and shame. Virtually all seriously consider suicide at some time after the abuse.

Telling is an essential act of healing for the survivor. It makes it possible for her to get understanding and help. It helps her admit to herself what happened. It allows her to see herself through the eyes of another, to feel compassion for herself. It can distance the survivor from her pain, and help her to grow into a strong, capable woman. In short, telling transforms her from a victim (defined by the act on the perpetrator) into a survivor (self-defined) and permits her to get on with her life.

Public telling, such as at a Take Back the Night March, is important for both the survivor and the audience. The survivor receives support and nurturance from an audience that believes her, and she feels empowered as a result of taking a horrifying life event and controlling it through her telling. Silent victims in the audience learn that they are not alone, that they too can survive. And perpetrators and would-be rapists lose their greatest protection, silence and fear.

Several years ago I revealed publicly that I am a rape survivor. Since that time, women have approached me everywhere I go to tell me their stories and to express their gratitude for my telling. They have told me they felt empowered, and they in turn have opened my eyes to the prevalence of sexual abuse and the importance of speaking our truths. I have never regretted my decision to tell, and it has resulted in only positive experiences for me.

Finally, it is truly disturbing that Ms. Shalit sees the telling of rape stories as somehow titillating ("sex sells," she says,

although Take Back the Night marches are not "selling" anything). Rape is an act of violence and power. Healthy adults hearing a story of sexual abuse are not "voyeurs" and do not experience sexual arousal. This dangerous view that any discussion of sexuality is taboo has damaged and silenced victims for far too long.

Gloria Allred
Los Angeles, CA

Ms. Shalit replies: Gloria Allred's stirring defense of "telling" does not address the premise of my article: that Take Back the Night, a forum intended to give rape survivors that opportunity, has been colonized by overzealous, partisan activists. My argument is not with survivors of rape who speak out but with protesters who, under the guise of advocacy, pressure these women to become oratorical showcases for campus radicalism—"lenses of oppression," to use their breathless phrase. I did not demean rape victims but criticized those activists who would increase the psychic burden of the already difficult task of speaking out publicly about rape.

While silencing survivors is precisely the opposite of what I intended to accomplish, I will admit to a certain ambivalence about Princeton's Take Back the Night march and other ceremonies of public "telling." In my article, I suggested that the hypnotic performance-art dynamic that makes Take Back the Night so compelling also makes it uncomfortably fetishistic, that the revolutionary enthusiasm which gives it political efficacy may also produce the occasional noble lie. I believe it is possible to embrace the spirit and meaning of Take Back the Night without abandoning one's capacity for critical thought about these issues.

Rather than arguing with Ms. Allred over the fine points of erotic psychology, I propose that the real issue is not voyeurism but the exploitation of voyeurism for smug doctrinal ends, a cynical use of victimization that holds up survivors as artifacts of America's "rape culture," declares rape the "crudest and most direct form of racism," and, without missing a beat, proclaims the need for campus speech codes.

▲WHY do East Asian immigrants perform so well in America?

▲WHY are two-thirds of America's black population middle class — while one-third remains in the ghetto?

▲WHY do Hispanic Americans acculturate more slowly than most other immigrant groups?

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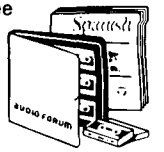

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Rape victims' advocates do their cause no good by treating the veracity of an accusation as an inconsequential side issue. "Perhaps her story was true. Perhaps not," Ms. Allred muses. I doubt the young male student who was accused and subsequently exonerated of accosting a classmate, dragging her to his room, raping her, beating her, and dumping her unconscious body in a stairwell would comprehend or appreciate Ms. Allred's polite suspension of judgment.

Double Trouble

Dirk Roggeveen's support for a second prosecution of the four Los Angeles police officers under federal statute ("Better Fed than Dead," Aug./Sept.) illustrates the politicization of the Rodney King case. The Supreme Court in the 1920s ruled that separate prosecutions by state and federal authorities under certain circumstances do not violate double-jeopardy prohibitions. Civil-liberties groups such as the ACLU have historically opposed this decision, until the King case.

If violations of state and federal statute occur simultaneously, the two cases should be filed in parallel. Charges should not be filed after an unsatisfactory outcome. This is sour-grapes justice, a double dip into the judicial system in an attempt to reach a predetermined result. It is also a racial prosecution, since these officers would not be retried on criminal charges if their victim had been white.

Karl Peterjohn
Wichita, KS

WHILE I CAN APPRECIATE and even agree with Dirk Roggeveen's view that federal prosecution of civil-rights violations by state agents is a necessary check on corrupt or reluctant local governments and juries, I am disturbed that he downplays the aspect of double jeopardy. The Fifth Amendment reads, in part, "nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb,..." It does not continue "...except in the case of civil-rights violations."

The rights of all persons in our country would be better served if the federal courts tried all such cases, bypassing the local courts. This would avoid the double-jeopardy problem.

The proscription of double jeopardy is a basic protection for individuals against the state. Although the federal government may reprosecute these cases with good motives, it is the nature of government to oppress, and eventually such seemingly justified circumvention of constitutional protection will be abused.

Patrick Guthrie
Fayetteville, AK

Mr. Roggeveen replies: My article on federal prosecution of police brutality neither supported nor opposed such prosecution of the four LAPD officers. Since I have had no part in the federal investigation, I am not aware of the facts considered in the dual-prosecution decision in the Los Angeles case. The article only explained why such prosecutions generally are important to securing the rights of the citizenry against abuses of police power.

I am well aware of the liberty and justice interests that give rise to the concerns with dual prosecution of federal rights violations. I expect the Founders did not anticipate a large and far-reaching federal prosecutorial apparatus when they drafted the Fifth Amendment. Double jeopardy is a philosophical and legal issue that should continue to be debated despite the current status of the law. We must not ignore other liberty interests when considering the subject of double jeopardy in federal prosecution of civil-rights cases.

How Fierce?

In "Read Our Lips" (June), Stephen Moore mentioned that the "underdog" Oklahoma Taxpayers Union "overcame fierce opposition and big dollars" from the state's power brokers, including the media, in its effort to win passage of State Question 640, which requires that all future tax increases receive a "supermajority" in the legislature or be approved by a vote of the people at the next general election.

Moore failed to include two critical points. First, *The Daily Oklahoman*, the ultra-right-wing newspaper with the largest circulation in the state (over 2 million readers in a state with a population of 3.2 million), was in favor of State Question 640, so much so that it ran frequent editorials urging passage, including one on the front page the day of the election. Although the television stations and the daily papers in Tulsa were opposed to S.Q. 640, Moore's reference to media opposition hardly rings true.

Second, proponents of S.Q. 640, including the Oklahoma Taxpayers Union, actually outspent their opponents, called Progress Oklahoma, by a large amount. Proponents of the measure spent $699,373, while opponents spent $309,000. So Moore's assertion about the opposition's "big bucks" was way off base as well.

Kirk A. Rodden
Professor of Political Science and History
Murray State College
Tishomingo, OK

Mr. Moore replies: Kirk A. Rodden is wrong in one of his claims and misleading in the other. First, *The Daily Oklahoman* was the only major news outlet to support Question 640. In addition to the Tulsa papers, the Oklahoma Press Association opposed the initiative. According to Oklahoma Taxpayers Association President Dan Brown, "75 percent of the media was against Question 640." I would describe this as "fierce opposition."

Rodden claims that the supporters of Question 640 spent $699,373 to win passage. According to the State Ethics Commission, the funding was closer to $300,000. The source of Rodden's error was probably including the approximately $400,000 cost of getting the initiative on the ballot. Nonetheless, I was wrong when I wrote that the taxpayer groups were outspent by the opposition. It turns out that opponents and proponents spent about $300,000 each.

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Remote Controls

Donald Stedman using his pollution-detection device

California may soon take a big bite out of automotive pollution—and save businesses thousands of dollars in the process. A bill in the legislature would encourage a precedent-setting remote-testing program that might replace some of the nation's toughest emissions regulations.

California's Clean Air Act requires each of the state's regional air quality management districts to develop a pollution-reduction plan. The plan designed by the South Coast AQMD, which regulates the Los Angeles Basin, forces big employers to cut the number of miles their employees drive during rush hours. Companies that don't develop and implement mandatory carpools or other trip-reduction schemes regularly get socked with $5,000 fines.

But these trip-reduction plans don't target the largest cause of auto-related pollution—the tiny minority of drivers who operate the dirtiest cars.

Data gleaned from the 1987 Southern California Air Quality Study (SCAQS) show that cars may cause more than three-fourths of hydrocarbon emissions and 90 percent of all carbon-monoxide pollution in our cities. University of Denver chemistry professor Donald H. Stedman has developed a portable remote infrared sensor that can accurately measure those emissions from cars as they drive on city streets. (See "Going Mobile," Aug./Sept. 1990.)

Stedman has found that 10 percent of all cars cause 50 percent of the carbon-monoxide pollution from cars; 10 percent of all drivers also cause more than half the auto-related hydrocarbons. (Many of these high emitters are the same cars.)

At a July SCAQS meeting, California Air Resources Board researchers Lowell Ashbrook and Douglas Lawson reported that Stedman's device correctly measures carbon-monoxide emissions 95 percent of the time and hydrocarbon emissions with 85-percent accuracy.

Yet federal and state regulators haven't approved remote testing as part of any pollution-reduction plan. Without these "clean-air credits," local pollution regulators have no incentive to use a technology, no matter how much it cuts smog.

This may soon change. A bill sponsored by state Sen. Gary K. Hart (D-Santa Barbara) would give businesses clean-air credits if they used the remote device to test and repair their employees' cars. Firms could substitute remote testing for carpools, subsidies for employees to use mass transit, or other trip-reduction plans. The bill, which the AQMD supports, must pass both houses of the legislature. A vote should take place this fall.

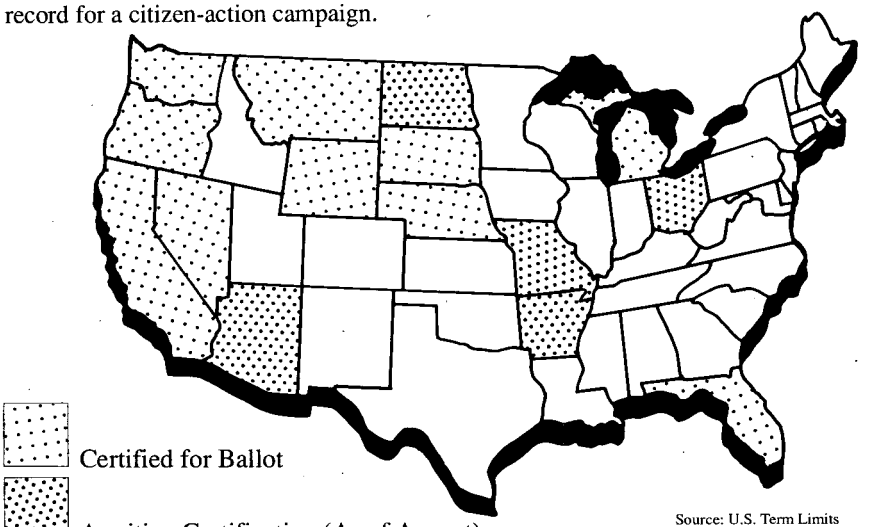
Hart's bill may bode well for remote testing nationwide. The Clean Air Act of 1990 will require employers in eight cities outside California to implement trip-reduction plans by the end of 1996. If remote testing earns clean-air credits, it could substantially cut pollution without huge costs or inconvenience to innocent drivers.

California is well-known for its tough and innovative pollution regulations. If remote testing can pass the scrutiny of the AQMD, regulators in Washington may have to follow suit.

—Rick Henderson

The States of Anger

Voters are angry with Congress this year. They keep reminding us by turning out incumbent after incumbent in primaries. But this November voters could strike their greatest blow yet against incumbents. Voters in as many as 15 states will have the opportunity to vote on ballot initiatives limiting congressional terms. Supporters of term limits have gathered 3.4 million signatures to get the various initiatives on ballots, a record for a citizen-action campaign.



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"Decisions and actions by individuals faced with ethical choices collectively determine the hopes and quality of life for everyone...it will be essential for people in all walks of life to live by an environmental ethic so that our world can be brought back into balance." —Robert Cahn

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BALANCE SHEET

Assets

Check-Off Play? George Bush's debt-reducing check-off proposal is no gimmick. In *The Wall Street Journal*, the Heritage Foundation's Dan Mitchell notes that each tax dollar earmarked for debt reduction will also permanently cut federal spending by a buck. If every taxpayer took a full 10-percent check-off, spending and interest-payment cuts would balance the budget by 1997.

Common-Wealthy. Boris Yeltsin wants to create "millions of property owners, not just a handful of millionaires." Beginning October 1 the Russian government will give all citizens vouchers they can trade for shares in state-owned assets. Yeltsin will privatize most housing within two years and half of Russian industry by the end of 1995.

Driving Rein. Want to stalk somebody? In 48 states, if you get your target's license-plate number, the motor-vehicles department will sell you his address. (See "Secrets for Sale," Feb.) A bill sponsored by Rep. James Moran (D-Va.) would stop such sales of personal information without the driver's consent.

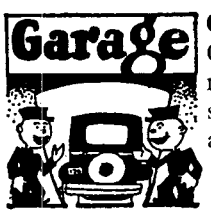
Grain Drain. Mother Nature may open more markets than Carla Hills. Last year's typhoons wiped out the Japanese rice harvest. Makers of sake, rice beer, and rice cakes now pay twice what they did last year for rice. *The New York Times* reports that these powerful firms may push the government to allow rice imports for the first time.

Liabilities

Freak Enterprise. Phony enterprise zones may replace military bases as the pork-barrel project every legislator wants. *The Wall Street Journal* cites Louisville, whose 45.7-square-mile "enterprise zone" is twice as large as Newark. It encompasses spiffy Standiford Airport and the University of Louisville campus—hardly pockets of "pervasive poverty."

Call Snooping. Bell Atlantic Corp. received 22,000 requests for its customers' telephone records from the FBI, IRS, and other government agencies last year. The company complied more than 90 percent of the time. In some cases, notes *The Washington Post*, Bell didn't inform its customers the government had their phone records.

Ticket Snub. Spectacor Management pulls out of its plan to privately renovate the Los Angeles Coliseum. (See "Just Privatize, Baby," Dec.) Spectacor hasn't sold enough $90,000 luxury boxes and $3,600 club seats to finance its $116-million spruce-up job. "Because of current economic conditions," Spectacor partners tell the Coliseum Commission, "there is no longer a role for a for-profit developer."



Cold Comfort. Get your car's air conditioner recharged fast. Chlorofluorocarbons are being phased out; retail sales of freon (R-12 refrigerant) end November 1. *Consumers Research* reports that a freon substitute—R-134a—exists. But the refrigerants aren't interchangeable. Adapting a car air conditioner for R-134a may cost $2,500.

—Rick Henderson

Red Tape, Green Money

Ever wonder why your local property taxes continue to climb? Part of the reason lies not in city hall but in Washington, D.C.

Columbus, Ohio, recently estimated the costs to the city of meeting federal environmental mandates. It found that the city devoted 10.6 percent of its 1991 budget, or $62 million, to complying with federal environmental rules. It projected this amount would increase to 23.1 percent by the year 2000.

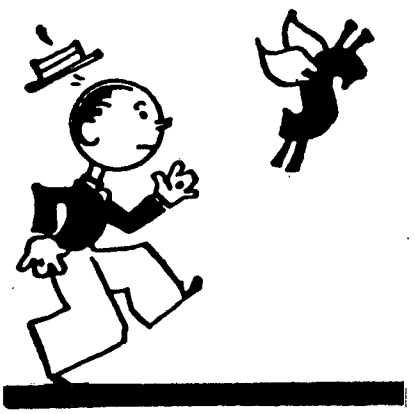
In all, the city found that the cost of complying with federal environmental rules was $184 per household in 1991. It projected that figure to rise to $466 (in constant 1991 dollars) by the year 2000.

And the city found that many of the rules it has to comply with have little relevance to the area's real environmental problems. For example, federal rules require the city to test for 52 different pesticides in its drinking water—including pesticides used only on pineapples and rice, neither of which is grown in Ohio.

"There's no rhyme or reason to it," Richard Hick, the city's budget manager, told *City & State*. "Only 16 of those pesticides are common in Ohio." Meanwhile, the city has identified 14 other pesticides not on the list that are common in Ohio and is testing for them.

"We want to test for what's actually in our watershed," says Hicks, "not waste our money testing for things we know aren't there."

—Charles Oliver



Voucher Venture

Sue public schools for malpractice? Disgusted with plummeting test scores and violence-ridden campuses, more than 150 low-income parents are doing just that. With the help of the Institute for Justice, a public-interest law firm in Washington, D.C., parents in Chicago and Los Angeles are suing their school districts for trapping their children in "an educational caste system."

The suits accuse the states of Illinois and California of failing to provide these inner-city children with the equal educational opportunities their state constitutions guarantee. The plaintiffs argue that any political or legislative remedies would take too long to help their children.

Chicago and L.A. public schools certainly have room to improve. During a typical year, roughly 1 in 50 L.A. public-school students is assaulted while attending school. Nearly half of the students drop out before graduation. In most Chicago public schools, *more* than half the students drop out before graduation. And those who make it to their senior year and take college admission tests receive ACT scores that rank in the bottom 1 percent of the nation.

If successful, the suits would require the states to provide each plaintiff's school-aged child with a voucher equal to the amount of money the state government spends per student—about $2,500. (Local school districts kick in another $3,000 or so.) Each voucher could then be redeemed for tuition at the public or private school of the student's choice.

School board officials are skeptical. In a prepared statement, Illinois State Board of Education spokesperson Lugene Finley said, "The State Board believes that anything that would take money from public schools obviously wouldn't...serve the purpose of improving public schools."

Officials imply that more money alone would improve the quality of education at these schools. Yet the Chicago and Los Angeles public schools are hardly cash-starved. The Chicago school system boasts a $2.33-billion budget, L.A. schools command $3.9 billion, and both spend at least $5,000 per pupil, including state money.

Parents in L.A. and Chicago are seeking tuition vouchers in court.

A California voucher initiative failed to qualify for this November's ballot, placing the institute's suit in the spotlight. Clint Bolick, the institute's head litigator, says the odds of a legal victory on all counts are "maybe 50-50." Since many state constitutions guarantee universal access to a basic education, a favorable ruling in either Los Angeles or Chicago would reverberate across the nation. "The courts," notes Brookings Institution scholar John Chubb, "have traditionally been more open to disadvantaged groups than the political arena."

—Grant Thompson

Casualties of War

On any given day in 1991, five out of every nine young black men who live in Baltimore were in some trouble with the law. A study released in September by the Alexandria, Virginia-based National Center on Institutions and Alternatives says the drug war is largely responsible for this state of affairs.

The NCIA study reports that on an average day, 56 percent of the city's 61,000 black men between the ages of 18 and 35 were either in prison, on parole or probation, being sought on arrest warrants, or awaiting trial. An April NCIA study found 42 percent of Washington, D.C.'s young black males in legal trouble. Timothy J. Roche, project director at NCIA, says "these patterns mirror other cities with large minority populations."

Nearly 13,000 persons were arrested for possessing, selling, or making drugs in Baltimore last year—more than three times the number arrested for committing violent crimes. This represented 24 percent of all arrests. The National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates that whites make up 77 percent of drug users, blacks 15 percent, and Latinos 8 percent—similar to the racial composition of the country as a whole. But last year in Baltimore, where blacks constitute 60 percent of the population, 86 percent of those arrested for nonviolent drug offenses were black.

That a disproportionate number of blacks would be arrested for selling drugs isn't surprising: Inner-city neighborhoods have a higher black population than the suburbs, and urban drug deals often take place on street corners or in other conspicuous areas. But the figures are startling nonetheless: Of those Baltimore juveniles arrested for the sale or manufacture of drugs, 13 were white, more than 1,300 black.

The study indicts drug warriors for incarcerating nonviolent drug users and street-corner dealers while ignoring such alternative sanctions as drug treatment, victim restitution, and mentoring programs. Roche also says such politically popular law-enforcement tools as mandatory minimum sentences don't let agents of the criminal-justice system "tailor sentences to meet the severity of the offense and the characteristics of the offenders." (See Trends, February.)

The release of the study led Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke to again call for decriminalizing drug use. "We have to take the profit out of drug trafficking," Schmoke told the Baltimore *Sun*. "I know people will say 'there he goes again' talking about decriminalization, but the policies that we have aren't working."

While Roche believes drug legalization should be considered, he hopes the debate over legalization won't deflect attention from the reforms his group seeks.

—Rick Henderson

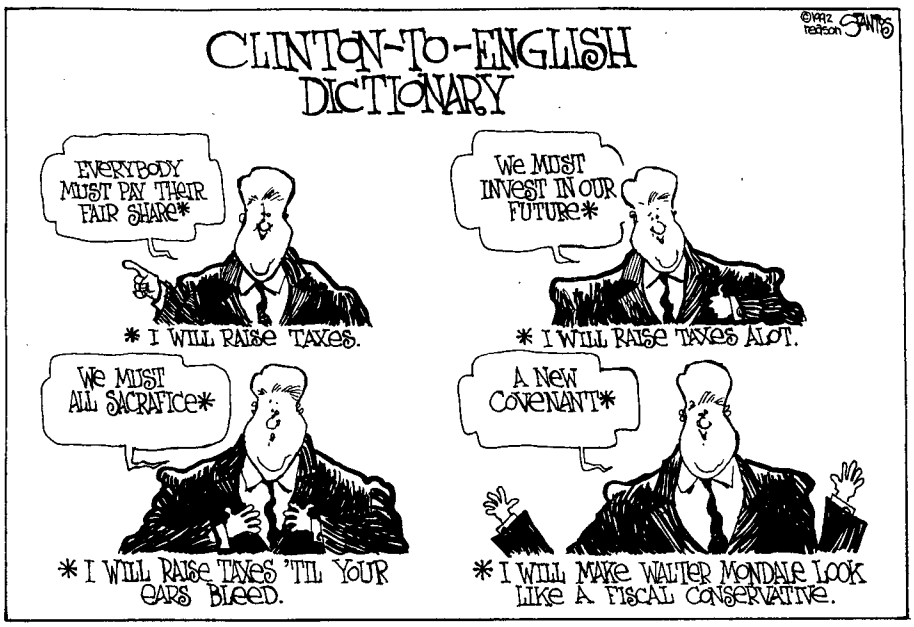
BRICKBATS

Gil DiNello, a member of the Michigan Senate, is a longtime member of the National Rifle Association and has consistently opposed all efforts to regulate firearms. So why did he introduce legislation that would ban high-powered water guns? Says DiNello, "Real guns are intended to kill. This is intended as a toy."

In an effort to attract tourists, North Korea is offering a honeymoon travel package, including visits to a maternity hospital and an irrigation dam. And who says there's no room for romance in the communist world?

Donald Wildmon's American Family Association is upset with Cape Giradeau County, Missouri, prosecutor Morley Swingle. An officer of the local AFA chapter tried to get Swingle to bring charges against video stores renting adult tapes. But, reports *Adult Video News*, Swingle chose first to find out what community standards were. He polled 237 people who had just served as jurors. When over 70 percent said that Americans should be free to watch whatever they want in their own homes and that stores should be free to provide the material, Swingle declined to prosecute any of the stores. Rather than thanking him for saving the county the $25,000 it would cost to try a case it probably couldn't win, the AFA criticized Swingle for spending $137.46 on the poll.

In Southern California, a battle between environmentalists and animal-rights activists has turned ugly. The state has begun trapping and killing foxes in the Ballona Wetlands. This has met with the approval of local environmental groups, who claim that the swiftly reproducing foxes, which were accidentally introduced into the area by man, are decimating endangered species of birds and generally wreaking havoc on the ecosystem. Animal-rights activists object to the killings—of foxes, that is. They've been leaving death threats on the answering machines of local environmentalists who support the program.


CLINTON-TO-ENGLISH DICTIONARY
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EVERYBODY MUST PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE*
* I WILL RAISE TAXES.
We MUST INVEST IN OUR FUTURE*
* I WILL RAISE TAXES ALOT.
We MUST ALL SACRAFICE*
* I WILL RAISE TAXES 'TIL YOUR EARS BLEED.
A NEW COVENANT*
* I WILL MAKE WALTER MONDALE LOOK LIKE A FISCAL CONSERVATIVE.

Like most federal agencies, the Environmental Protection Agency maintains a fleet of cars for official use. And like most agencies, the EPA is partial to luxury cars—Lincoln Town Cars and Crown Victorias, in particular. In fact, the EPA fleet averages only 6.3 miles per gallon, less than 25 percent of federal fuel-efficiency standards.

Texas Republicans countered Bill Clinton's August bus tour through their state by hiring an Elvis impersonator to trail him. The faux King set up rival rallies where he sang and served bologna sandwiches. The Republicans did this to show that Clinton had no right to claim the mantle of Elvis. They have a point. Elvis served in the Army, kept his wife at home, and while he, too, may have never inhaled, Elvis swallowed more than his share of pills.

Senate Chaplain Richard Halverson opened a Senate session earlier this year with this prayer: "Gracious Father, investigative reporting seems epidemic in an election year—its primary purpose to defame political candidates....Eternal God, help these self-appointed 'vacuum cleaner' journalists to discover how unproductive and divisive their efforts are." Apparently, the chaplain memorized the first rule of public speaking: Know your audience.

In a departure from its usual policy, the Justice Department has decided not to seize the car or home of Leslie Cayer Ohta under federal forfeiture laws, even though her son was allegedly dealing drugs out of them. Ohta, an assistant U.S. attorney, heads up the department's seizure operations in Connecticut.

Charles and Glenda Bishop of Cedartown, Georgia, haven't been so lucky. Despite a court order to do so, Polk County Sheriff Jack Kirkpatrick refuses to return $44,000 he seized from the couple in a failed drug investigation.

—Charles Oliver

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by Patrick A. Heller

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R

A BETTER CLASS OF SLEAZE

BY TODD SEAVEY

Living in New York City gives you many chances to see just how yucky some of the results of a free press can be. A friend of mine recently expressed a desire to visit the city and, while here, see "where the pornography is sold." This is sort of like going to Paris and asking where the Frenchmen are kept or going to Seattle and asking where the espresso is.

Where isn't there pornography in New York? Even pure-minded folk like my friends and I find ourselves forced by New York street ads to ask questions like "What is lap dancing?" (The first time I saw that term, incidentally, it was spelled with two *p*s, leading to speculation that a caribou might be involved.)

This may come as a shock, but I get the impression that a lot of this pornography stuff is *really dirty*. It's understandable that many people have a hard time feeling the world would be a poorer place without films like *Loving Lesbians Giving Enemas* and *The Sperminator*.

Another friend of mine finds that as part of his basic cable package here in Manhattan he gets a few hours of adult material every night on the "commercial use" station, Channel 35. We stole a few guilt-wracked glimpses. I shouldn't have been surprised that, instead of beautiful, erotic imagery, the channel featured much that is grotesque or laughable or both, such as the producer addressing viewers while sitting on a toilet, ugly guys spanking each other, leather-clad dominatrices advertising their phone services with appeals such as "Call me now, you worthless piece of ****," and so on.

So here's my concern: If smut is seen as unethical, there's always the danger that our most upstanding citizens will be soft on free speech. But how can smut be seen as morally aboveboard when it's so *defiantly, aggressively sleazy*?

Mind you, I don't think the viewer-cum-voyeur who watches pornography is doing anything immoral. This stuff may have a dementing effect, though, if only because it's already considered outside the bounds of decent society and therefore is produced in a spirit of surrender to degradation.

When a segment on the aforementioned Channel 35 starts with a billy club-wielding police officer yelling "No peeing in public!" at a semi-clad woman, you know 1) it's time to avert your eyes and 2) the artistic credo in operation is something like "How low can we go?" rather than "How can we best instantiate Beauty?"

Perhaps there's a Catch-22 here. Pornography will only be accepted by mainstream society when it stops being so perverse and will only stop being so perverse when it is accepted by mainstream society.

I thought I saw a chance for conservative acceptance of smut one year ago. Back during the large-breasts-and-penises phase of Clarence Thomas's Supreme Court confirmation hearings, when he was accused of pornography consumption as well as sexual harassment, I was hoping his conservative allies on the Senate Judiciary Committee might defend his right to porn. Instead we heard arguments such as Sen. Orrin Hatch's that there may be people as perverted as Anita Hill alleges Thomas is, "but surely they are in insane asylums." Now, I would not suggest that Republicans leap to the defense of sexual harassment. Still, it would have been neat if Thomas had said he did talk about Long Dong Silver and pubic-haired Coke cans, but not in a harassing context.

It would have been a valuable learning experience for the whole nation to see conservatives defending the right to smut and—perhaps more importantly—the right to make crude jokes. The traditional association of conservatives with censorship and liberals with free speech would have been reversed much as it was during the free-speech-on-campus debate. We might then have seen a grand alliance of libertarians, conservative Sunday school teachers, and the decadent right-wingers P. J. O'Rourke calls "pants-down Republicans." Then Dick Boddie, who nearly became the Libertarian Party nominee for the '92 presidential race, could have led this coalition to the White House, buoyed by the support of hordes of adult-movie fans operating under the assumption that "Dick Body" must be a retired porn star.

Until then, pornographers might want to ward off censors with humor, which seemed to work well during the P.C. wars. While renting wholesome films in my local video store, I've noticed titles that even the most puritanical prosecutor would feel silly attacking. *Butt Boys in Space* ("Blasting off for Uranus!") may be a step in the right direction.

Todd Seavey is a writer in New York City.

TOM DALY

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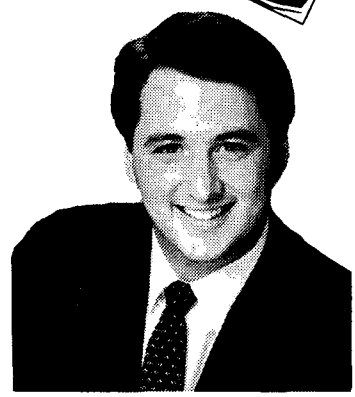

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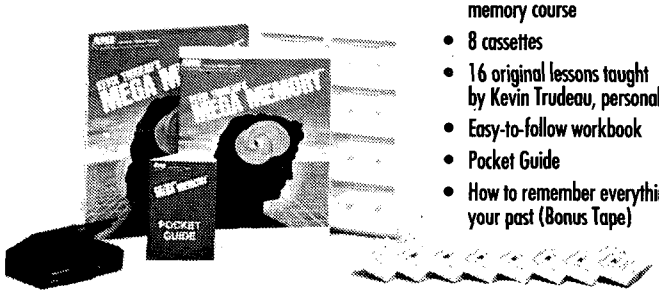

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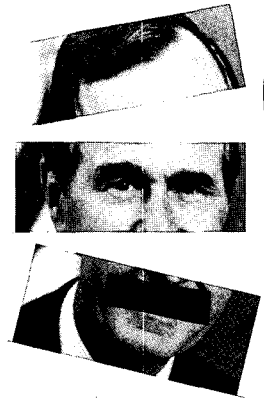


LOOSE LIPS SINK SHIPS . . .

The Democrats, erroneously trumpeted by the press as appealing to the New Generation, must in truth guard against backlash from the baby boomers: Billy Clinton and Albert Gore look like the two guys we hated most in high school. Clinton's got that evil grin; he's laughin' because he's havin' just a little too much fun. He's getting lucky with every girl in school—even, I'll bet, yours. He's goofing off, getting away with it; didn't inhale, my ass. Damn, he even ends up on scholarship in England while there's a stinkin' war going on.

Clinton is far savvier than George Bush, yet this may be his dilemma. He could be Sununu-smart. He's got an attitude, and he looks oh so smug. He is prone to a constant smirk, a fact his operatives must have noticed before wiping it off his face sometime just before the Democratic National Convention. I don't see it much anymore, but it used to be that no matter how hostile the question, you'd see Clinton sporting this all-knowing grin. He's too damn smart! He knows he'll skate out of trouble! He knows he's going to win! (When Hillary Rodham Clinton, Esq., tsk tsk, acted like she was superior to the stay-at-home cookie-baking moms, campaign body snatchers swooped in to grab her, and the old Hillary hasn't been seen since. So just watch out, Bill.)

Albert Gore, on the other hand, never smiles; he doesn't have to, because he's virtually perfect. His daddy was a senator; he's a senator. All the best schools, never in trouble a day in his life, concerned for the environment. For all the hoopla about the generational theme of the Clinton-Gore ticket, polls indicate their lowest support comes from people in their own age group. Aha! Our chance to finally get even with these bastards—on a real election day!

As much as I am personally reluctant to "go negative," the best thing Clinton-Gore have going for them is...Bush-Quayle. The Democrats' strengths are small potatoes (sp?) compared to the GOP malaise. Now, let's preface this with a paean to Commander Bush's outstanding foreign-policy initiatives; he did blow the Gorbachev-Yeltsin transition by a few months, but I'll give him credit on most else.

However, I hate to tell you duffers: England voted out Winston Churchill in 1945, and all he could claim credit for was being absolutely right on appeasement when no one listened, putting together the allied powers, daringly leading a terrified nation through the Battle of Britain, and kicking Hitler's butt. So to George and Dan: We thank you for vanquishing communism. Good job, guys. Now, get outta here, you knuckleheads!

How is one to take Bush seriously? He purports to run against Congress because they forced him into his June 1990 announcement that he would raise taxes. I confess to thinking at the time how brilliant a strategy that budget deal must have been, because it looked so absolutely idiotic to all of us out of the loop, we of limited conceptual skills and nowhere near the intellectual firepower of a John Sununu or a Richard Darman.

There must have been something devilishly ingenious in this "compromise" that was simply inexplicable to those of us on the outside looking in. Give up your one visible promise to the American people, the one that brought you out of Ronald Reagan's shadow and made you look tall. Give it all up without getting anything in return? Oooooh. Must be something really subtle goin' down here. You must have gotten those stupid Democrats to cash in some pretty fat chips out behind the barn. And when we learned that these chiefs of the Bush domestic agenda, Sununu and Darman, had scored perfect 1600s on their SATs, we knew that we were soon to be humbled by the sublime gifts of these masters of the policy universe.

THE BUNGLE

AND PRESIDENCIES. By Thomas W. Hazlett

But you see, I am stupido: There was no magic in the smoke. It was just as imbecilic as it looked. Bush got nothing but his political head handed to him. Fooled me again!

The president's men now endeavor to rewrite history with a line about being strong-armed by congressional bullies into breaking the "No New Taxes" pledge. Remember exactly how Bush delivered that 1988 line, and please explain to us where the fudge space is: "The Congress will push me to raise taxes, and I'll say no, and they'll push, and I'll say no, and they'll push again. And I'll say to them: Read my lips. No new taxes." Hey, if you plan to wiggle out of your pledge, at least load it up with some weasel words.

But no, George. You were being accused of wimpdom; George Will was calling you a "lap dog." You wanted to be seen as a rugged, stand-up guy, and so you made a big point of pissing on the weasel words, facing down the tax-grabbing Democrats. It made you look brawny. It gave Bubba a reason to forget you went to Yale and had scaled the ladders of power by being friends with the rich and famous, never doing squat on your own. You chose the words to define your political persona anew. And, by God, it worked. Bubba checked "Bush-Quayle."

Ha, ha, ha. It felt very nice to be president, and you certainly didn't want to be tied down to any asinine campaign rhetoric. Bob Teeter told the president that surveys said most Americans didn't expect Bush to keep his promise anyway. Hell, why worry? Once elected, Bush simply discarded the pledge as easily as a party platform.

How can this mean anything other than: I'd rather wheel and deal with the Democrats in Congress than keep my word to you. Republican revisionism claims the deal was date rape: Sure we talked to the Democrats, but nothing would have happened if they hadn't forced their way on the president.

Nonsense. The White House consummated their budget affair in plain view of the public and with every waking member of the Republican congressional delegation dialing 911. The great majority of Republicans in Congress voted against the president—the deal passed with Democratic votes—prompting Sununu to go storming around the Hill threatening to use Bush to campaign against disloyal Republicans in the primaries.

The Democrats did want to raise your taxes, just as Bush said in New Orleans, but with Gramm-Rudman in place and a Republican in the White House, that could have been tough. Bush only had to veto each offensive fiscal measure burped out by Congress, and let Gramm-Rudman kick in with across-the-board spending cuts. The interest groups would yelp, but that's why Bush said he wanted to be The Man: He'd hold the line against the big spenders.

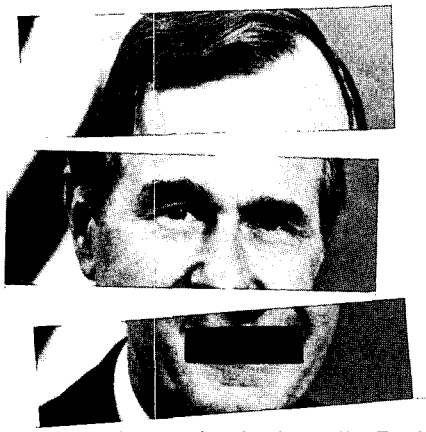
No new taxes? You fell for that? Personally, he'd rather make a little trade with his friends down Pennsylvania Avenue.

The most amazing administration defense is that the Democrats in Congress swindled our president. The budget deal was "raise taxes now in exchange for spending cuts later," and those dastardly Demos broke their word. Forget the fact that this line of argument concedes that Bush reneged on the taxpayers so as to cut a deal with politicians who then stiffed him—a damning indictment of his competence to act as a fiduciary for the American public. The whole nonsense lampoons presidential leadership.

The Republicans plead that the Democrats are sneaky, and poor Bush thought they could be trusted to cut spending. Cut

spending? Democrats? This exhibits the level of naivete for which Jimmy Carter is still a national joke. (Invade Afghanistan? The Soviets would never!) Arguing for the re-election of a man who was so easily snookered on the grounds that America needs experience in office is so absurd as to swallow itself.

Note carefully that compromising with Congress was fundamental strategy in a Bush administration that loved playing the nonconfrontational good cop (much warmer and fuzzier than those ideologues under Reagan). Alas, George Bush had been a fiscal-policy flip-flopper way back, from "voo-doo economics" (1980), to supply-sider (1988), to tax-hike compromiser (1990). By 1992, battered by Pat Buchanan and



BUSH FAILED TO SEE ANYTHING IN AMERICA THAT NEEDED FIXING WHEN 88-PERCENT APPROVAL RATINGS GAVE HIM CARTE BLANCHE TO PURSUE AN AMBITIOUS AGENDA.

plummeting in the polls, Bush again grafted supply-side rhetoric to his public-finance metaphysics in his State of the Union speech, issuing a stern 90-day deadline for Congress to act on various tax-cutting and deregulatory measures.

The bogus deadline passed without a peep on April 20 or April 28, something like that (see, you don't remember either), despite a he-man threat that if Congress ignored him "the battle will be joined." With his Houston acceptance oration, Bush has announced his vehement pledge to veto all over-budget spending bills, when in fact he had signed into law such an appropriation only the previous week. The new George Bush, or just another rotation of a multifaced hologram?

All of which puts poor George Bush in a sour re-election pickle. He flicked away his store of political capital and plunged (by his own administration's admission now) the U.S. economy into recession. What should be his slogan this year: "Read My Lips: No *More* New Taxes"? Should he hunt for a technical defense of his reneging, like: "I Said No New Taxes (We Just Raised Your Old Ones)"? Or, should he go on an honesty trip and come clean with: "What Are the Chances I'd Lie to You Twice"?

It is ironic that the Democrats continue to fume over "slick" Republican campaign tactics, because 1992 features a reverse mismatch. Slick Willie has ever-so-craftily redone his party so as to gut the Reagan Democrat exodus that laid his predecessors so low, while Dull George runs an almost buffoonish effort. With the monumental collapse of communism, he did preside over the greatest American conquest, and with the hard strike at Iraqi aggression he brought home a gold medal in international diplomacy (not to mention real-world combat). The guy is a commander-in-chief. By the scoring rules of politics he should be given beaucoup credit.

But by the same token, Bush squandered his historic chances, failing to see anything in America that needed fixing when 88-percent approval ratings gave him carte blanche to pursue an ambitious domestic agenda. The world that Bush made safe for tax cutting, deregulation, and free trade is a wonderful place; Mr. President, how about cultivating those policies here at home?

Reflexively, George Bush recoiled from pursuing any agenda; people from Bush's neighborhood do not engage in such grubbiness as pushing agendas. His regal blood preferred to rise above the ugliness of ideology; better to remain at a safe distance from the public-policy trenches. Now he is cast adrift, grasping at themes, slogans, fixers, and elixirs 3.67 years into an administration he once called "kinder and gentler."

The Republicans must be haunted by what might have been. If only Bush had lost to Michael Dukakis in 1988, how fat the GOP would be sitting today. With the House banking, pay-raise, and post-office scandals, Jim Wright and Tony Coelho and Alan Cranston cowering in shame, the economy puttering and sputtering, and coming after eight years of Reagan's supply-side fun and games, the 1992 reapportionment would have given the GOP its first real chance in three generations for national-majority status. But no.

George won, asking nothing of his mandate and quickly reneging on what he had promised. He ran without voicing any interest in the Republican Congress he now claims he needed to get anything done, and in fact his party, incredibly, lost seats upon his 1988 election. According to national survey data, Republicans have now seen all of their impressive registration gains during the 1980s vanish.

Four more years? Only a Congressional Democrat could love that. I'm not telling you how to vote, but...if you'd like to do something really nice for your Republican friends, invest in their future. Hold your nose doubly tight and vote Clinton-Gore in '92.

Contributing Editor Thomas W. Hazlett teaches economics and public policy at the University of California, Davis.

Fat Cats TO Pussycats

RATING THE POLITICAL CONVENTIONS

BY THOMAS W. HAZLETT

ARTHUR MATSON

Best Banner: *Democrats*

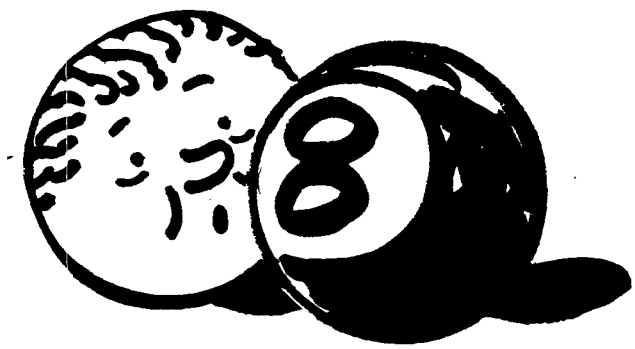
Held by rally marchers, without punctuation: "Gay & Lesbian Animal Rights Caucus." No kidding. If you ever wondered about a French poodle swishing down the street, fearful its rights were going unprotected...relax. This interest group may occasionally bark up the wrong tree, but it will give some bite to those lobbying efforts in Washington. Just so long as they're not perceived as pussycats. Woof.

Best Button: *Democrats*

"Lemmings for Clinton" was the favorite lapel attire of the Brownies, and it recalls that the soul of the Democratic Party lies elsewhere. On the other hand, the soul of Jerry Brown probably lies somewhere in the Galaxy XGF-9.

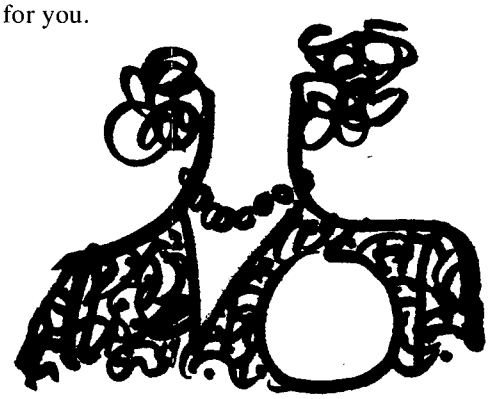
Best Subliminal Slogan Implying the Other Guy is Boffing Lots of Chicks: *Republicans*

"Family Values." What is a family value? A discount mail-order bride operation? A reasonably priced adoption agency? Or is it growing up with Mom & Pop, Sissy, and Jr. down at the malt shop? Or, more darkly, does it say: Get straight, young man! Keep your knees together, young lady! Or, darker still: DON'T LET BILL CLINTON KISS YOUR BABY—YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE'LL CATCH!



Best Coordination with a Local Retail Chain: *Republicans*

You'd think that New York's zillion and one nifty restaurants could top this, but Houston was perfectly positioned for Campaign '92 with an entire chain of entertainment attractions called Slick Willie's Family Pool Halls. I had some beers at the original with the night manager, Buzzy, but Gennifer never showed. Monday is Free Pool Night, however; there's a family value for you.



Most Conspicuously Unseen Button: *Democrats*

Change for a dollar? In 1980 the runaway best-selling button at the New York Demo Con read simply: "59¢." The knowledgeable knew this meant that a woman in America made but 59 cents for every dollar earned by a man, a lowly ratio that had been stuck there for years. These buttons have disappeared because, under 12 years of Reagan-Bush-Quayle oppression, the ratio has skyrocketed way up into the 60s. Social progress: the Democrats' curse, the button makers' salvation.

Miss Congeniality: *Houston*

New York's liberal mayor ruthlessly shipped out the homeless, cleaned up the streets, and covered the city with baton-twirling coppers, but New Yorkers still have that attitude thing. ("National political convention? Yeah, yeah, yeah.") Houston actually appreciated the business; we were met at the airport by a welcoming committee cheering us off the plane, answering questions, actually acting helpful. They didn't even steal our wallets.

Worst Speech: *Democrats, Jesse Jackson*

When the expectations are high, you'd better not whine. And Jesse's anticipated whoopee level was stratospheric. The dependably bombastic Jackson has never before failed to whip

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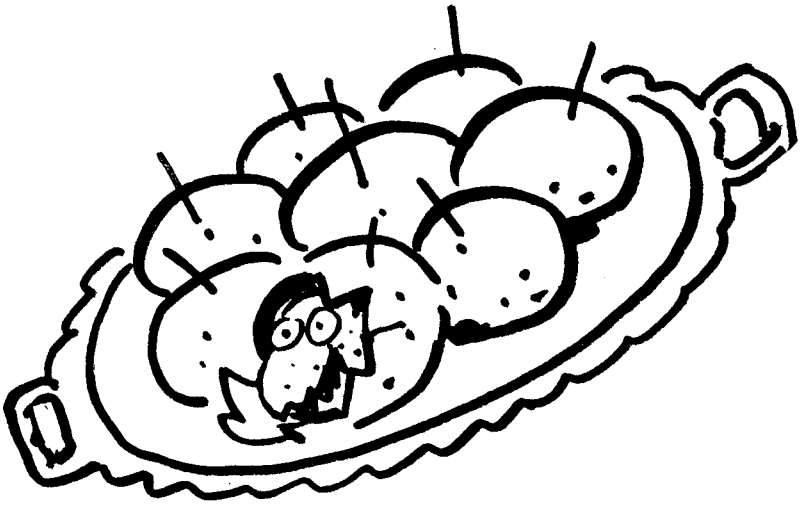
the Democratic elite into a frenzy. In San Francisco in 1984, he delivered a speech that left several middle-aged delegates dizzy with the vapors. In Atlanta, his virtuoso bravado bumped Kitty and Mike off into the orchestra pit. In New York, sadly, Brother Jesse just bombed. Jackson "Lacks Old Fire," charitably headlined *The New York Times*. Jackson began unsteadily, inexplicably launched into a desperate scream, and finished in a screechy hysteria. Gone were the rich tones of the super-orator, Rev. Jackson: He squeaked like a boy soprano, which, considering what Bill Clinton had done to him politically, he might now be. There was none of the smooth but powerful glide up to the dramatic climax, complete with haunting refrain ("Our Time Has Come," etc.). Instead there was this incoherent, homey tale of the "giant and the midget," twins who, by genetic luck, emerged with entirely different angles in life. Many thought Jesse had become confused over a certain Schwarzenegger and De Vito movie.

Best Tippers: *Republicans*

If you've got it, squander it. Democrats have much federal concern for the working man, but they apparently don't like to get personally involved. The cabbies I talked to in New York were uniformly p.o.'d at the Dems, who usually took free bus shuttles to Madison Square Garden, creating traffic snarls, and then tipped ever-so-lightly in the few taxis they rode. The GOPers made a better impression on Houston drivers—who deserve a little something extra, if only for thoughtfully equipping their cars with fuzzbusters (every taxi I took had one)—although I'm sure more than one nice Yellow Cab was soiled by a drunk College Republican.

Scariest Threat to the U.S. Constitution: *Republicans, Pat Buchanan*

What the hell does "cultural purity" mean? Why don't you just spell it out, Pat—in German? When the rightists mount the podium of patriotism and immediately conduct a purge of the citizen population, it reeks of a conservative nihilism. Reagan's great knack was to drag these Know-Nothing nativists up to a higher, more inclusionary plane. Now they're kicking and screaming.



Best Food: *Republicans*

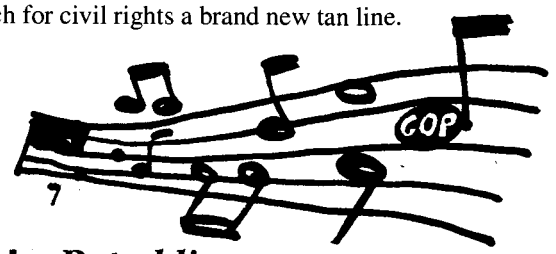
Lots to choose from here, but personally my favorite reception was Ron (Estee) Lauder's GOP bash in Houston's Museum of Natural History. The beer was cold, the barbecue was delicious, and there was something about eating all that red meat amongst the Kudu, impala, and wildebeest exhibits. I asked for some brisket of Pterodactyl, and I noticed that the ribs on the Tyrannosaurus Rex had been picked clean. That's a Texas BBQ. But it's curious that Lauder was in Houston, when the big makeover was in New York.

Best Corporate Sponsors: *Democrats*

The GOP has really fallen down since the Republican Women's Federated had a gala reception sponsored by the Teamsters in 1984. There was something about the blue-haired matrons of Westchester mixing with the bullies of the interstate that just made my hormones race. But the Democrats, the party of Congress, now enjoy a fling with corporate America made all the more intense by the fact that they can't be seen in public together. All the better to denounce corporate interests by day and to really get to know them over champagne and caviar at a candlelit table by night. The Ocean Spray reception at the Water Club was exquisite, but my favorite was the NYNEX reception at a posh midtown club. Angry protesters denounced the upscale Democrats from just beyond the front door: "Fat Cats Dine in Luxury While Americans Go Homeless!" Yes, these Democrats are taking their Republican image very seriously.

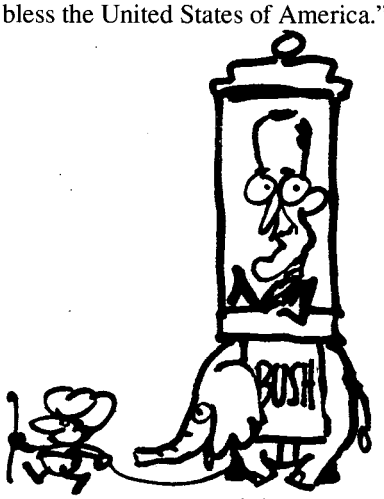
Best Strippers: *Democrats*

The Paradise Club, just down the street from Madison Square Garden, hoisted a friendly "Welcome Democrats" sign. I'm outraged!, as the feminists might declare. (But I don't blame the strip entrepreneurs for trying; now that Teddy's remarried, I hear he's on the prowl again.) The week of the convention, a local judge threw out a law banning public toplessness on sex-discrimination grounds. Female liberationists/strippers were baring tops in public places all week. This gives the march for civil rights a brand new tan line.



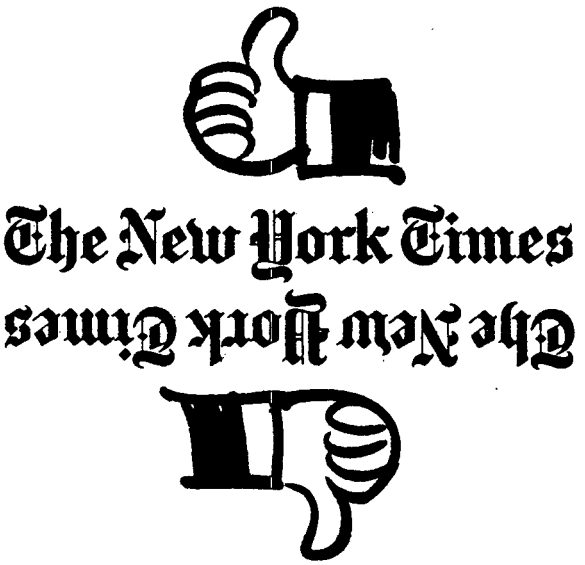
Best Music: *Republicans*

Politics is about mood swings, and bouncy tunes are absolutely vital, particularly in kicking off any campaign's critically important Presidential Acceptance Speech Spectacular. The Democrats were melodically undistinguished until their grand finale, when they came up with some excellent Fleetwood Mac, "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow," and a swell original score, "Circle of Friends." Basso boffo. The Republicans started stronger, with some bouncy unwed-mother music from Quayle nemesis Tanya Tucker, some fine C&W crooning from Randy Travis, and even a little Three Dog Night. (The funniest musical event was when the theme from *La Cage Aux Folles*, unbeknownst to GOPers, accompanied Barbara Bush's gay old time on Wednesday night. Rumor has it that Pat Buchanan was actually tapping his foot.) But Lee Greenwood? Get him back on the 4 a.m. cable spots, where he belongs! And the Republicans simply clanked out with the musical accompaniment to their Thursday Night Balloon Drop extravaganza, hitting (no kidding) "I've Been Working on the Railroad" as President Bush hit his "...and God bless the United States of America."



Oddest Support Group: *Republicans*

A merry band of hard-core GOP supporters that landed front-row seats in the Astrodome (they popped megabucks) came wrapped in East Asian attire and displayed signs like "Khalistanis for Bush" and "India Out of Khalistan." They were wildly enthusiastic, and George Bush must have liked them too, because these guys at least weren't bugging him about not having a domestic agenda. Perhaps they gave the president one of the "Turban Cowboys" buttons they were sporting.



Funniest News Coverage: *Democratic Convention*

The New York Times got a little dizzy with its spin control. In reporting on Jesse Jackson's speech, it told its readers on page 1: "And Mr. Jackson...discounted the importance of the party's drift away from old-fashioned liberalism. 'History will remember us not for our positioning but for our principles....' " Blah, blah, blah. Ooops. On page 11, the *Times* prefaced the exact same passage from Jackson's speech with the comment, "...he spoke in somber tones, devoting the bulk of his remarks to the issues of the poor and powerless, in sharp contrast to the platform. And he clearly rebuked the party for its grand strategy. 'History will remember us....' " All the news that's fit to print—twice, with opposite implications.

Best Speech: *Democrats, Mario Cuomo*

He's the perennial winner on style, form, and degree of difficulty: Mario makes warmed-over liberalism sound "new and improved!" There's a sneaking suspicion spreading, though, that the governor goes undefeated only because he plays in such a weak league. "Mario Cuomo is the Larry Bird of the Democratic Party," noted *San Francisco Examiner* columnist Chris Matthews. "He's the only white guy who can give a good speech."

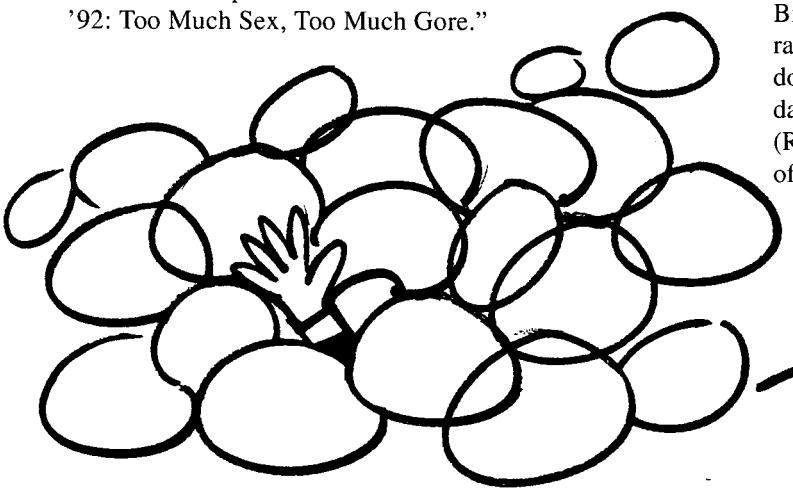
Most Boneheaded Political Strategy: *Republicans*

The GOP assault on Hillary Clinton is political suicide, as even a dim-witted RNC chairman should be able to figure out. OK, she's a borderline feminazi, a power-hungry and sue-

happy attorney-at-law. Since she is a prominent adviser to the future president, her politics are fair game. One problem, guys: Your attack backfires. Each salvo launched puts Bill Clinton on the national news (the Democrats being crafty enough to keep Hillary a million miles away) with a stock outraged-and-appalled response: How low will the Republicans go, attacking even my wife? Will they stop at nothing? (High-school juniors could write this script.) It gives the philanderer of January a chance to be the loving, loyal husband of November. He's standing up for his little woman and subliminally taunting the President for picking on a girl ("I didn't know he was running for First Lady"). Genius Republican strategists with a lock on the White House? You be the judge.

Best Slogan Sacrificed for the Good of the Country: *Democrats*

When choosing a vice-presidential running mate, Clinton could really have given consumers value for their campaign check-off dollar. If only he had gone with Sen. Charles Robb of Virginia, the slogan could have been a killer: "Clinton-Robb! Babes, Babes, Babes." Or why not the senior senator from Massachusetts: "Clinton-Kennedy: Party 'Til You Puke." Or, as the political junkies were hoping: "Clinton-Cuomo: The In 'n' Out Team for the '90s." Instead, we have to fall back on a bumper sticker I saw in Houston: "Democrats in '92: Too Much Sex, Too Much Gore."



Best Balloon Drop: *Republicans*

For all their carping over "trickle down," the Democrats never fail to employ it as a technique in their balloon drops. We were expecting better this year, as the DNC, embarrassed by previous balloon fiascoes in Atlanta and San Francisco, had retained special experts to supervise. This year they launched 60,000 balloons, but only about 52,500 really made it down the chute, and those haltingly. The Republicans buried 'em: 250,000 bright little elastic orbs. It was a finale spectacular, with glitter that actually shined (the Dems' was not even sparkly), a special delayed drop of mammoth, oversized balloons, and indoor fireworks. Economic policy played a big part in the GOP's competitive advantage: The Democrats had to pay 50 cents to fill each balloon with air, even though volunteers using tanks can inflate one in seven seconds. The charge was a "corkage fee" to a local (balloon fillers'?) union.

Best Logistics: *Republicans*

I know the Democratic Convention looked better on television, but the Madison Square Garden logistics were ugly. The traffic snarled, as did the locals. (Houstonians were amazed to see their streets flow freely.) The Democrats proved they have not lost their love for command-and-control approaches, as bureaucratic nonsense haunted the proceedings. I had to pick up a press pass daily, for instance, several hours before the events began; this needless exercise—the Republicans handed out the week's set of daily passes at the beginning—burned at least an hour of my time and lots of cab fare. The only explanation was a deep and abiding Democratic commitment to lines, process, and regulation. Then there was the technical snafu: The Garden's elevators broke down immediately after Bill Clinton's acceptance speech, with 20,000 conventioneers racing for the blow-out parties. The herd had to push its way down several floors in lockstep; it was sweaty, clumsy, and dangerous—I almost lost an eye to an American flag jab. (Reminding me of the dangers of super-patriotism in the hands of political opportunists!)

Best Souvenirs: *Republicans*

AstroHall, adjacent to the Dome, housed a huge bazaar of political memorabilia. This was in stark contrast to New York, where the booths hustling goods and services were pathetic in both quality and selection. I suppose the Democratic Party operatives just haven't had much disposable income during the last 12 years, and this is perhaps the economic crisis they are most concerned about ending. In Houston I was able to buy me a genuine, 100-percent, official H. Ross Perot wristwatch. And—no kidding—it stopped running the next day. ■

Thomas W. Hazlett writes frequently about politics for REASON.

THE BOOTH AND CONSEQUENCES

DO VOTERS GET WHAT THEY WANT?

By Loren E. Lomasky

RON DERHACOPIAN

You're cordially invited, courtesy of the Constitution of the United States of America, to cast a ballot on the first Tuesday in November. If the readers of REASON are representative of the total population, about half of you will decline. Those abstentions elicit regular comment and rebuke from the professional pundits.

It is noteworthy that half of the eligible population chooses not to vote. But even more noteworthy is that the other half does cast a ballot. For it is by no means obvious what reason they can have to do so. This year we face the task of electing a president. Something in the neighborhood of 90 million ballots will be cast. A voter will, if rational, realize that the chance of her vote swinging the election to her preferred candidate is so close to zero as to be negligible. "Your vote matters!" the pre-election propaganda solemnly intones. The plain fact, though, is that it doesn't.

However plain the fact may be, it is something of an embarrassment to political scientists and economists who study voter behavior. The hard-headed assumption that these analysts bring to their investigations is that voters are self-interest maximizers, that what they attempt to secure in polling booths is essentially the same as what they seek in markets. When they purchase a VCR or select among job opportunities or invest in pork-belly futures, they are understood to be choosing so as to best advance their overall well-being. Similarly, as rational voters they will cast a ballot for the candidate or policy whose victory they expect to make them best off.

Sophisticated statistical analysis of vote distributions offers at least prima facie support for this hypothesis. But its logic is thoroughly undercut by the observation that rational maximizers will vote neither for the Republican nor the Democrat but instead abstain. Time and energy are, for all of us, scarce resources. Since the chance of one's own vote proving decisive is less by several orders of magnitude than the likelihood of being maimed in an auto accident while on the way to the polls, it would seem that a truly rational person will instead devote the half hour in question to reading a good book, drinking whiskey sours, or pursuing some other end that yields a perceptible positive return.

A typical response of orthodox political theory is to posit a kind of voter schizophrenia. According to this model, individuals are motivated to vote by a sense of civic duty; they want to "do the right thing," and that desire moves them by the millions out of their easy chairs to the electoral precincts. But once the curtains of the voting booths close behind them, self-interest once again assumes control and dictates which levers to pull.

The schizophrenia theory does, in a sense, fit the facts. It is consistent with the evident fact that many people do vote, and it offers an explanation of why, when they vote, the ballots they cast tend to be in line with their interests. But the fit of theory and observation comes at a high price. The alleged shift that takes place after the curtain is drawn undercuts the idea that individuals are always trying to maximize their self-interest. Even worse, the schizophrenic-voter hypothesis fails to explain why the transformation takes place. If we genuinely want to understand electoral behavior, we have to do better.

One tempting alternative to the standard theory maintains that self-interest isn't ubiquitous but is instead largely confined to activity in the market. When an individual turns from the business of making a living and consuming goods to engaging in political behavior, a different persona emerges, that of citizen. Civics-book injunctions concerning how he should act become a reasonably close approximation to how he does act: Setting aside his narrow, selfish interests, he is energized to display concern for the public weal.

This alternative account is also problematic. It too posits a split within the motivational structure of individuals. And it disregards the considerable evidence that political behavior is not distinctly selfless. Students of politics, especially those identified with the Public Choice school, have assembled a very persuasive case that political activity can largely be explained by the same wealth-maximizing hypothesis that is central to ordinary economic analysis. Of this the civics-book model is oblivious.

Both theories go wrong for essentially the same reason: Each fails to attend adequately to the nature of the opportunities provided by elections. Casting a vote is importantly unlike both purchasing a commodity in the market and altruistic giving. Why that is so deserves a closer look.

When I purchase a can of beans at the supermarket, my choice is costly in the sense that I thereby relinquish other valued options. We can define the opportunity cost of that can as the next most highly valued use of the money spent. To put a dollar in the street-corner Santa's kettle is also costly; that's a dollar that I cannot use to satisfy my other desires. But votes are not similarly costly. When I vote for Alfred E. Neuman rather than Pat Paulsen, I do not thereby give up the opportunity to select Paulsen instead. That is because I am not in a position to choose between Neuman and Paulsen. Rather, my choice is between a vote for Neuman and one for Paulsen. The difference may seem to be merely semantic, but in fact it is crucial.

What I give up with the Neuman vote is the expected return to a vote for Paulsen. To lapse into technicalities for a moment, that is equal to the value I assign to Paulsen's election multiplied by the probability that my vote will indeed swing the election (i.e., the probability that exactly half of all the other voters will vote for Neuman and exactly half for Paulsen). When the number of voters is even moderately large, that probability is close to zero. So too, then, is the expected return to my vote. That will be true even if the value I assign to my preferred candidate's winning is quite substantial. A vote for Neuman is, for all practical purposes, costless in terms of political outcomes thereby forgone.

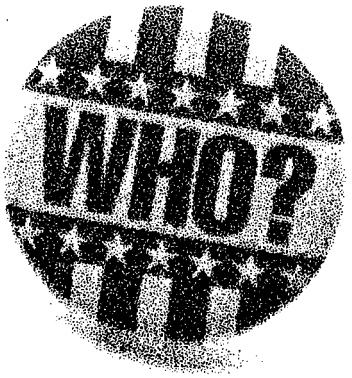
Here's another way to understand the difference between electoral and market behavior: Private activity, whether motivated by narrow concerns of self-interest or by altruism, is consequential. By choosing to buy beans I give up the opportunity instead to indulge in charitable relief—and vice versa. By way of contrast, voting is largely inconsequential. What I relinquish through my vote is only an infinitesimally small expectation of affecting outcomes. Since that is so, the logic of

voting itself militates against the assumption that voting behavior marches to the beat of the same drummer as behavior in markets and other contexts of private activity.

Because voters are unlikely to "get anything" from the direction of their votes, they have reason to indulge incentives that are not oriented toward outcomes. In the context of electoral behavior, these incentives loom very much larger than they do in arenas of private choice. Thus, even if it is reasonable for the theorist examining ordinary economic exchanges to discount incentives that are not oriented toward outcomes, it is not similarly reasonable to do so when trying to understand how democracies function.

But what sort of considerations other than the deliberate attempt to bring about the preferred outcome might dictate the casting of a particular ballot? A simple analogy may help. On any given autumnal Saturday collegiate stadiums across America are packed with fans cheering on their favored football team. "Go Troglodytes!" the fan cheers. How are we to understand this activity? Well, we could hypothesize that the fan yells if and only if he judges that the value he assigns to the Troglodytes' winning multiplied by the probability that the marginal effect of one more cheer will tip the balance between victory and defeat exceeds the cost to his lungpower of emitting the shout. But that image is awfully farfetched. It depicts the fan as making a kind of investment in football outcomes. It's much more plausible to suppose that the fan values cheering for its own sake; the expression of support for the Trogs is better viewed as a consumption good than as an investment good.

Or consider this similar case. Your friend is hospitalized and you send her a "Get Well Quick!" card. That courtesy may be motivated by a calculation that the probability of some therapeutic effect thereby derived times the value you assign to that result exceeds the cost to you of the card (and associated expenses). But again that doesn't adequately express the usual incentive for sending cards. Rather, one values the expressive act as such, not simply the putative benefits that may result from it. (And that is so even if it turns out that there is some detectable difference in prognosis between those who receive cards and those who do not.)



VOTING, LIKE CHEERING AT A FOOTBALL GAME OR SENDING A GET-WELL CARD, IS PRIMARILY AN EXPRESSIVE RATHER THAN AN INSTRUMENTAL ACTIVITY.

I propose that voting, like cheering at a football game or sending a get-well card, should be understood as primarily an expressive rather than an instrumental activity. One votes for Alfred E. Neuman rather than Pat Paulsen as an act of expressing support for Neuman rather than as a deliberate attempt to raise the likelihood of Neuman's victory. Rational individuals will indeed vote provided that the value they assign to the expressive returns obtained through a vote is greater than the costs thereby incurred. Despite the exceedingly remote chance of swinging the election, voting is as rational as attending football games and cheering lustily for one's team (and sitting out an election is as rational as spending one's Saturday gardening if one prefers flowers to football).

This expressive theory of voting avoids the schizophrenia of the standard self-interest theory of politics. But is it any better at predicting actual behavior? Don't people invariably "express support" for the candidate or policy that best fits their interests? If so, for all practical purposes, we might as well adopt the hypothesis that says voters are motivated by narrow self-interest.

Such congruence can indeed be expected to occur over much of the range of voting behavior—but not all. An important implication of the expressive theory is that voters may be systematically induced to vote for policies they would not select were they in a position to act decisively. They will be led to bring about outcomes that the majority does not prefer, that would be resoundingly rejected by a given voter were he in a position to choose decisively. That is because they confront what rational-decision theorists call a "multiperson Prisoner's Dilemma." This may seem forbiddingly arcane, so let me offer a simplified example.

Most of us subscribe in some measure to the principle that those who are relatively well off have a moral duty to devote some appreciable proportion of their assets to the relief of those less fortunate. For many of us, the chief service we pay to that principle is lip service. That is not necessarily because we are hypocrites.

We may genuinely believe that relief of indigence is a good thing; we may assign to it some positive value. But not enough to pry our wallets open wide. Giving to the poor is, alas, costly. Each dollar donated is a dollar of personal consumption forgone. Because we value the latter, we may donate little or nothing.

But if the cost of a dollar's charitable relief were, say, only 10 cents, we might allocate our resources differently. That is because failing to give is also costly. It is not pleasant to think of oneself as lukewarm in one's professed convictions, as morally subpar. Wouldn't it be nice, we might muse, to be able to come down on the right side of moral principles and also have the money to spend?

A pipe dream? No, an invitation to politics. For voting can be a low-cost way to indulge one's altruistic impulses. To see how this is so, imagine a referendum on the proposal that each person be taxed $100, the proceeds to be used for relief of the indigent. (In order to avoid complications of self-interested voting, suppose this is a foreign-aid measure.) Let's assume that the probability of a representative voter tipping the balance is 1 in 10,000, a relatively high decisiveness level. If the tax passes, the voter's wealth will be diminished by $100. Elementary arithmetical calculation reveals that the expected cost of a vote in favor of the measure is only one cent. If each elector values the activity of "expressing support for the poor" at, say, $1.00, then each will be induced to vote in favor of the measure. It will pass unanimously although each individual, if in a position to act decisively, would have rejected it.

The example is, of course, stylized. But despite its manufactured quality, it illustrates an important feature of democratic collective choice—and, not entirely incidentally, affords an important clue as to why public budgets continue to soar despite the palpable harm done to the average citizen. The point is that individuals can and will generate outcomes substantially different from those that they really wish to see obtain. Note that it is the institutional structure itself that is crucial here, not some implausible change of persona alleged to occur on election day.

SINCE HOW I VOTE IS CERTAIN NOT TO MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO POLITICAL OUTCOMES, I'M FREE TO INDULGE ANY HALF-BAKED IMPULSE THAT COMES INTO MY HEAD.

The implication of the preceding example might seem to be that democratic structures will induce individuals to "vote more morally" than they act in private contexts. Prisoner's Dilemma caveats aside, this result may be welcomed by the enthusiast for democracy. All the more reason, he may insist, to remove decisions whenever feasible from the private arena to that of collective choice. The ghost of Rousseau nods approvingly.

Although that inference conceals some dubious assumptions about the content of morality, I shall not pause to examine them here. But it is important to observe that the preceding example is ambiguous. It does not directly show that individuals will vote more altruistically than they act when making private decisions. It does suggest that they will behave less consequentially when casting ballots.

That tarnishes the moral patina displayed above because it is not only altruism that is costly in private contexts; so too is malice. The bigoted shopkeeper who will not trade with blacks thereby forgoes the income he could otherwise obtain. If I stomp on your toes because I hate you, you might retaliate by stomping on mine. Thus the shopkeeper might continue to do business with blacks and I might leave your toes alone. On the other hand, if the costs of malice were lowered, we might be led to increase our consumption of it.

Just as voting lowers the cost of expressing altruistic impulses, so too does it lower the cost of indulging malice. Consider a representative voter in 1933 Weimar Germany. Let us suppose, not unrealistically, that he bears some antipathy toward the Jews but would be unwilling in private activity to bear the costs of launching a pogrom or otherwise

seeking their destruction. However, by casting a ballot for the National Socialists, he can economically indulge his anti-Semitic impulses. The result of an entire electorate doing similarly is Hitler in the chancellorship. Again the result is a multiperson Prisoner's Dilemma, but this time one considerably less comforting to the democratic moralist.

The point to be drawn from these examples is not that voting is distinctly conducive to altruism or to malice but rather that, in comparison to private activity, it favors extremes of each. For one who is risk-averse, that is a reason to prefer private rather than collective decision making. But there's also reason to believe that voting may favor malice over altruism. This is due to the anonymity of the vote. One who "casts a moral ballot" may thereby secure expressive returns from the vote, but she does not receive the gratitude of beneficiaries. This is a disadvantage of electoral as opposed to private altruism. But for one inclined toward malice, anonymity will typically be a benefit rather than a cost. The veiled vote shields her from the reproach or retaliation of her targets. So the inducement toward malice afforded by secret balloting is greater than that favoring altruism. All this is speculative, but it should at least be a caution for the advocate who says the cure for the ills of democracy is more democracy. Sometimes, instead, it is less.

Although the civics books urge us to "vote responsibly," one of the most noteworthy features about voting choices as opposed to ordinary economic choices is that the former are an open invitation to irresponsibility. Since how I vote is virtually certain not to make any difference whatsoever to political outcomes, I'm freed to indulge any whimsical, voyeuristic, half-baked impulse that happens to come into my head. And when we observe the actual conduct of political campaigns, we see that the candidates pursue their Holy Grail by inviting us to do just that.

Are elections fought on "the issues"? Well, perhaps—but they're hardly the sort on which conventional political theories focus. What issue was it that made Willie Horton the second most important black political figure in the country in 1988? Why during the past several months were Americans wrought up over the question of whether a Texas billionaire and sometimes–talk-show guest was or was not an "outsider"? Does it really matter whether an aspirant to high office occasionally shares his bed with bimbos or another one can't spell *potato*?

VOTING IS NOT DISTINCTLY CONDUCIVE EITHER TO ALTRUISM OR TO MALICE, BUT IN COMPARISON TO PRIVATE ACTIVITY IT FAVORS EXTREMES OF EACH.

Yes, these do matter to many of our fellow citizens—just as baseball pennant standings or Princess Diana's marital tribulations do. For better or worse, these quasi-issues capture people's attention, fix in their minds an impression of the candidates, and attract them to the polls. They may be the stuff of soap opera, but to a considerable extent they determine who will be afforded the privilege of leading the nation. In a democracy, grabbing and holding on to the fleeting attention of voters isn't everything—it's the only thing.

You may be tempted to respond, "That's not the basis on which I form my political views." And that probably is true. But for every reader of REASON who ponders free-market waste-disposal alternatives, a thousand compatriots avidly scan each week's *National Enquirer* to get the scoop on Oprah's weight problem or the latest sightings of space aliens. In a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, they are the ones whose voices and votes are decisive. For politicians as with other celebrities, it's glitz, glamour, and image that keep the fans entertained and buying tickets. To understand the election, then, just keep in mind what the Bush and Clinton handlers know in their bones and will reveal in their every ploy and counterploy: Because elections are fundamentally expressive free-for-alls, not substance but rather sanctimony, sleaze, and sound bites will determine who gets to spend the next four years in the White House and who slinks off into an unwelcome retirement.

Contributing Editor Loren E. Lomasky, a professor of philosophy at Bowling Green State University, is co-author (with Geoffrey Brennan) of Democracy and Decision: The Pure Theory of Electoral Preference, *forthcoming from Cambridge University Press.*

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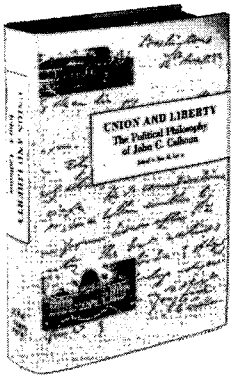

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Andre Marrou and Nancy Lord accept the Libertarian Party nomination.

GOING FOR THE BRONZE

ON THE ROAD WITH THE LIBERTARIAN TICKET

By Paul H. Weaver

ARTHUR MATSON

COURTESY OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

On a cloudy August morning in Detroit, Andre Marrou, the Libertarian Party's 1992 candidate for president of the United States, sits in a studio awaiting his turn on J. P. McCarthy's *Focus*, an hour-long news-and-interview program on radio station WJR. First on the agenda is Gary Moeller, the coach of the University of Michigan football team, who spars with the easygoing, know-it-all host over the question of how bad the Wolverines' new season figures to be without last year's Heisman Trophy winner at wide receiver. The next segment is a chat with Vicky Lawrence, a perky *Carol Burnett Show* alumna launching a talk show specializing in nonfreak guests and mainstream viewpoints. Finally it is the Libertarian's turn at the microphone.

"What do you stand for?" J. P. asks after a brief introduction. The Constitution, limited government, Marrou replies. "What would you do as president, cut taxes?" I'd repeal the income tax, abolish the IRS, bring the troops back home to defend America, and stop replacing federal bureaucrats, Marrou declares.

"What you say has everyone nodding their heads," McCarthy says. "It seems to make sense."

The remark is an aside, tossed off as part of the windup for a question about what makes Andre run, but it is the most important event I witness in four days following Marrou in Michigan and his running mate, Dr. Nancy Lord, in Connecticut and New York. WJR is the top public-affairs radio station in the nation's sixth-largest metropolitan market, and J. P. McCarthy is a mainstream broadcaster in a city that relates to power and position the way Hollywood relates to physical beauty.

For years, Michigan Libertarians' efforts to get a spokesman on the program have been rebuffed. Now J. P.'s longstanding Drop Dead has turned into a tentative Let's Talk. In this citadel of statism, with its leftish unions and protectionist corporations, in a medium that puts love-bombing and blame-mongering ahead of rational deliberation, the political philosophy on which the world's oldest constitution was built seems poised for an incongruous comeback.

To Marrou, the civil reception is evidence that his strategy for the 1992 campaign is taking hold. Unlike previous L.P. candidates, who, he says, have emphasized print media and long, reasoned, formal declarations, Marrou is focusing on the broadcast media and using humor. TV, he argues, is where the people are, and humor is a good way to connect with them. With these "secret weapons of libertarianism," Marrou predicts, the L.P. this year will make progress in its effort to become "the next major party."

Specifically, Marrou says he'll be on the ballot in all 50 states (by mid-August the count was up to 44, with only Alaska and Missouri looking somewhat iffy) and will win more votes than any of his five L.P. predecessors—at least 1 million. These are bold predictions, and some L.P. watchers are skeptical. But 1992 is the year of change, of outsiders, of widespread disillusionment with Washington, and Marrou is positioned to catch that wave and ride it, if not to the White House, then at least to new visibility and respect.

As I join up with the campaign in Lansing, Marrou's strategy still hasn't struck sparks among the national media, which, interested mainly in winners, have given him practically no coverage. But the campaign is making headway among the local media. Everywhere the candidate goes, it seems, a camera crew or newspaper reporter is on hand and a talk show on the schedule. In mid-August the campaign has amassed a sizable collection of clips and videos, most of them respectful.

There is an emerging sense that, as courtly black cable-TV talk-show host Lou Farrell tells Marrou after a taping in Dearborn, "This is your time." The libertarian view of where the country stands and the direction in which it should be heading—widely dismissed as the theoretical ravings of an intellectual fringe a decade ago—has begun to find a popular audience.

The object of this modest swell of interest is a slight, balding, neatly bearded 53-year-old with a penetrating bass voice and warm smile. Born a South Texas Democrat and raised on his father's cattle ranch, Andrew Verne Marrou acquired his French nickname while rooming with some French students at MIT. ("If you're looking for someone with a French name from Texas, here I am," Marrou tells an audience in Dearborn, smiling broadly and holding his arms wide in a welcoming, embracing gesture as he appeals for the Perot vote.)

Following graduation, he stayed in Boston and worked as an engineer for more than a decade. Divorce prompted a move to Alaska for the "freedom and opportunity," he recalls. There he dabbled in living off the land, launched a successful liquor-supply business, and, at a seminar for small businessmen, first encountered free-market ideas. Marrou was an instant convert. Reading the pamphlets he'd been given by a libertarian who attended the seminar, he says, he immediately realized that "this was what I'd believed all along."

In 1982, having achieved prominence as a citizen leader of the successful drive to repeal the state income tax, Marrou made the first of three runs as a Libertarian Party candidate for state legislator, the second of which was successful. In Juneau, he was a tireless critic of prevailing views, a role that brought him to the attention of REASON readers. (See "Mr. Marrou Goes to Juneau," October 1986.) In 1987 Marrou moved on to Las Vegas, where he works as a real-estate broker when he isn't campaigning. In 1988 he was the L.P.'s vice-presidential candidate under ticket leader Ron Paul, and last year he sought and won the party's nomination for president.

At a meeting of Justice Pro Se of Michigan in the serene, modernist Henry Ford Centennial Library in Dearborn, Marrou finds a friendly hearing for his populist libertarianism. Justice Pro Se is an association of people who have been defendants in government prosecutions involving such offenses as nonpayment of income taxes. Tonight's gathering includes some 150 members and guests, many in their 20s. A show of hands reveals that about half the attendees have never before attended a Libertarian event.

After an introduction by state L.P. chairman Bill Shotey, Marrou, nattily dressed in a double-breasted dark blue suit, white shirt, and artistic-looking tie covered with painterly splotches of color, strides down the aisle and mounts the stage. He opens with a joke. Have you heard about the derivation of the word *politics*, he asks? It comes from *poly*, which is the Greek word for *many*, and *ticks*, which are blood-sucking parasites.

The audience roars with laughter.

Marrou moves on to the story of how, with assiduous campaigning, he carried the tiny hamlet of Dixville Notch, New Hampshire. Dixville Notch is the place where by tradition everyone casts an absentee ballot so that the polls can close at 12:01 on the morning of the election and the results can be covered as an election-day news story. On primary day 1992, the Dixville Notch result was: Marrou, 11; Bush, 8; Clinton, 3; and others, 2 each or less. The vote, he says, shows that the Libertarians are well organized this year and can win. And the way it was covered in the media, he adds, shows one of the difficulties the L.P. campaign is up against.

While CNN and the A.P. wire carried the story of the Dixville Notch victory, many of the major national media either played it down or ignored it completely. For three days, Marrou says, PBS—the Proletarian Broadcasting System, he calls it—refused to report any of his votes in its stories about the New Hampshire primary results even though he ran 10th in a total field of 63.

Soon the candidate has segued into Marrou's Laws of Politics:

1. People are afraid of freedom.
2. If you smoke marijuana, inhale. Otherwise, what's the use?
3. When it rains it pours.
4. The press is always hostile to visionaries.
5. If guns are outlawed, how will liberals collect taxes?

The audience loves it, cheering and clapping. Smiling broadly, Marrou mimics George Bush's voice and accent as he reads a long, funny cartoon lampooning the president. Dana Carvey he isn't, but no one seems to mind. The Henry Ford Centennial Library rocks with merriment.

Now Marrou, turning serious, launches into his main theme. There's a crisis in the United States, he says. We're in the worst recession since World War II. Inflation and unemployment are high. The Los Angeles riots were the worst since the Civil War. Taxes of all sorts total 47 percent of GNP, the highest in our history. Regulations have ballooned by 50 percent in just the last four years. Things are bad, very bad.

The crisis was caused by the Democrats and Republicans, who between them have enacted the entire 1928 Socialist platform and seven out of 10 planks in the Communist Manifesto. Only the Libertarians have a clue as to what caused the crisis, Marrou says, and only the Libertarians understand what to do about it.

Government is the problem, he says, and the solution is to get rid of the problem. End the income tax. Abolish the IRS. End the recession with the vastly increased disposable income freed up by the tax cut. Stop hiring new government bureaucrats. Abolish the Federal Reserve Board and monetize gold and silver. Restore constitutional government.

Then some more jokes and aphorisms:

The Democrats favor welfare, the Republicans favor warfare, and the Libertarians favor none of the above.

The Democrats want to be your mommy, the Republicans want to be your daddy, the Libertarians want to treat you as adults.

The Democrats are always afraid that somewhere, someone is making more money than they are and they want to put a stop to it. The Republicans are worried that someone, somewhere is having more fun than they are. The Libertarians are in favor of both making money and having fun.

Amid the fun and laughter, the candidate moves swiftly to a brief coda. The Libertarians, Marrou says, will be the next major party. We won't win this time around, but we will win sooner or later; the only question is when. Help us, join us, vote for us.

The room explodes in sustained applause. When decorum returns, the candidate takes questions, and the event, if this is possible, becomes even livelier, with the exchanges continuing for an hour and a half until the building closes.

It is a brilliant performance but, I later wonder, of what? Most of the time Marrou is staging an attractive, sharply etched classical-liberal candidacy for high office. Some of the time, however, he's more like a stand-up comic than a constitutional politician, and in such moments his thinking sometimes seems to detach itself from the luminous, rational, moral world of John Locke and Thomas Jefferson, imploding into a nasty mass of opportunistic government bashing and flaky anarchism. On these occasions, Marrou sounds as if he'd say anything if he thought it would lower people's regard for the existing system, and as if he has little idea of or interest in the limited state he'd erect in its place.

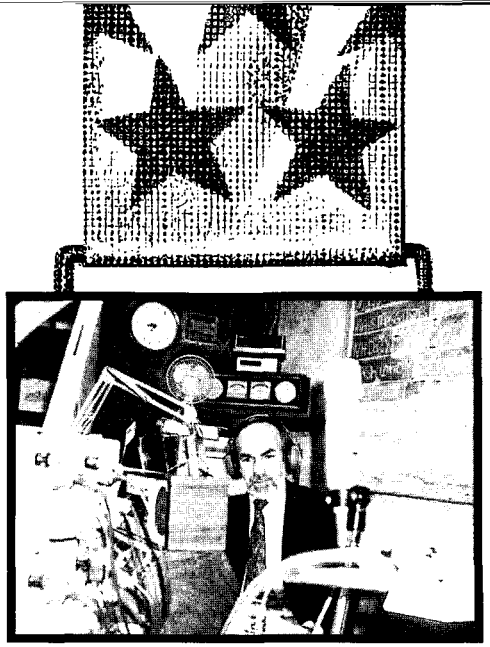
The problem here isn't really Marrou's effort to use humor, which, though not always hospitable to precise communication, is a valid means of differentiating himself from

Bush and Clinton and conveying his basic message. His funny distinctions among Democrats, Republicans, and Libertarians, for instance, frame good reasons why a voter might decide he's had it with the major parties and cast his vote for Marrou. At another point, the candidate's acid humor neatly limns the "insanity" of a system that simultaneously subsidizes the growing of tobacco and discourages the smoking of tobacco; that stations more troops in Japan, and spends more on the defense of Japan, than the Japanese do; that first armed, then went to war against Saddam Hussein.

The problem is, rather, the highly polemical, somewhat oversold, negatively framed concept of libertarianism lurking behind the jokes, and this pattern isn't limited to Marrou. A similar tendency is evident in the L.P. platform. In this not always cogent document, the party declares, among other things, "We recognize the right to political secession. This includes the right to secession by political entities, private groups, or individuals." In other words, if the Libertarians have their druthers, a state, interest group, or person strongly opposed to a policy or act of government would have the right to declare its independence of the unit of government and proceed to do whatever it feels like with respect to it. No conditions, no explanations, no need to show a decent respect for the opinions of mankind—just a blank check for anyone to exercise an unlimited veto over anything that rubs him the wrong way. They can't be serious. Yet there the idea is, spelled out in black and white, in the party's most important official document.

Similarly, Marrou, in response to a question about defense issues, suggests that Washington delegate the defense function to the states, and that the state of Michigan in turn delegate the defense of its own borders to General Motors to perform gratis as a corporate promotion. Huh? Leave aside the question of whether 50 state defenses add up to a national defense and consider only the matter of competence. G.M., which has lost about a third of its market share in recent years, is barely able to make and sell cars any more. What reason is there to think that it would learn to wage war to our satisfaction? Why would someone who believes in a market economy and the profit motive imagine that a business would provide defense services on a not-for-profit basis?

The proposal sounds like pie in the sky, part of an indirect promise that a Libertarian president could wipe out virtually all federal taxes while still maintaining a strong military, eliminating the budget deficit, and paying down the national debt. Defense is one of the two functions, along with the maintenance of a court system, that Marrou says he'd have the federal government retain. He and his running mate officially call for maintaining a military of 1 million troops—less than half today's level but still a large and expensive force. The G.M. scheme seems to be Marrou's way of suggesting that we might get something for nothing, that we can persuade companies to pay for defense the way the Olympic committee persuades them to pay for the Olympics. This isn't just a harebrained defense idea, then; it seems to be a load-bearing element of Marrou's antitax political economy.



Marrou on a New Hampshire call-in show.

TALK RADIO IS RECEPTIVE TO MARROU'S POPULIST MESSAGE.

Later, when I ask for more detail, Marrou backs off. He says it's just a new idea some libertarian theorists are putting about, not a solid policy proposal that he and the party have a real investment in. He quickly steers the conversation to the more traditional notion of basing America's defense mainly on the state militias.

On a wet afternoon three days later on the veranda of a shopping mall on the northern shore of Long Island, Marrou's running mate, Nancy Lord, decides she's waited long enough for a local TV crew to show up as promised and goes ahead without them to deliver her stump speech before a bare dozen people, most of them members of the Suffolk County Libertarian Party, who have braved the rain that patters down during her remarks.

There are obvious points of similarity to Marrou's pitch. Like him, Lord evokes a sense of national crisis, draws attention to the economy's chronic weakness, calls for a radical cutback of government, expresses anger over the chronic abuse of state power, and summons hope for a day when the nation's traditions of freedom and constitutional government will be recovered by a robust, growing Libertarian Party. The differences, however, are also striking.

Where Marrou is humorous, polemical, demotic, opportunistic, Lord is fact-filled, issue-oriented, intellectual, eloquent. She doesn't eschew the parts of the Libertarian creed that remain a tough sell in George Bush's America, such as the legalization of drugs, a topic Marrou avoids. Neither does she let the comedian or salesman in her get the upper hand over the constitutional politician. In fact, there is no discernible trace of the comedian, and not much of the salesman, in her public persona. Lord is, paradoxically, both more doctrinaire and more moderate than Marrou.

Despite massive increases in education spending, our public schools are failing to educate, Lord says. American students test behind children in 10 other major countries. In math and

COURTESY OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

science, the best American students are only as good as the average Japanese student. On a national test, only 12 percent of 17-year-olds could solve math problems using fractions. Only 20 percent can write a coherent, grammatically correct, two-paragraph letter applying for a job. The time has come to take education out of the hands of bureaucrats and put it back into the hands of parents, where it belongs.

Government programs for the poor are a bad joke, she says. Nearly $200 billion a year is spent on programs that trap people in a dependency plantation. Some 70 percent of welfare funding goes to pay the salaries of bureaucrats. For poor people trying to work their way out of poverty, government has regulated away the first rungs on the economic ladder. Today, if you want to sell hot dogs on the streets of Washington, D.C., you must first put up $500 for a license, $1,500 for a tax bond, and $7,500 for a government-approved cart.

Government should get out of our personal lives, Lord continues. People should decide for themselves what to eat, drink, read, or smoke and how to dress, medicate themselves, and make love. She isn't preaching moral relativism, she says. Libertarians' belief in freedom is based on the idea that morality grows out of ethics and education, not the police. Those who want government to enforce moral standards are actually undermining moral responsibility, she says. And once the police are freed from the hopeless task of controlling private behavior, they'll do a better job of putting criminals in jail and making the streets safe for the law-abiding.

Lord closes characteristically with a careful answer to the person who asks, Why should I vote for you if you can't win? For one thing, she says, an election isn't a horse race. You don't win anything if you pick the winner, and the lesser of two evils is still an evil. Moreover, a vote for the L.P. candidates isn't wasted if they don't win. It will tell officials that they aren't fooling you, and that you aren't putting up with politics as usual anymore. The message will get through.

Lord delivers these thoughts in a loud, low-pitched, emphatic voice that conveys seriousness, lucidity, and, often, anger. A taller-than-average, striking-looking woman who, at 40, could be in show business, she captivates her audience. She is the perfect complement to Marrou, and together they turn the high-road, low-road cliché of presidential campaigning upside down: It's vice-presidential candidate Lord who stresses ideas, policies, and high national values, and the presidential candidate who attacks the opposition, tells jokes, and seeks to arouse the animal spirits of the audience. In a further reversal of roles, it's the female candidate who puts on a display of intellect and learning within the formal framework of the speech, while the male campaigner is the one who plays down the substantive, rational elements of his candidacy, strays from formal structures, and reaches out to touch his listeners' emotions and make human contact.

Lord comes to her role naturally, having spent no small part of her adult life in the formal settings of medical school (she received the M.D. from Maryland in 1978) and law school (J.D., Georgetown, 1990). She's been something of a rebel and outsider all her life, a nice Jewish girl who, growing up in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, demonstrated against the Vietnam War and was expelled from high school briefly for selling an alternative newspaper banned for publishing a nude photo. Unhappy working as a physician, she took a job testing medicines for a pharmaceutical company, then developed an expert consultancy serving attorneys bringing medical malpractice suits. Finding that she loved testifying in court, Lord entered law school. In her second year, on a project on drug issues, she discovered libertarianism.

Two years later she entered the Washington, D.C., mayoral race as the Libertarian Party's alternative to incumbent Marion Barry. "It was a role I found irresistible," she says, "the drug legalizer against the drug addict." At last year's L.P. convention she was persuaded by party leaders to run for the vice-presidential nomination. Marrou says he'd wanted a woman as a running mate, but his own pick, Dr. Mary Ruwart of Michigan, lost to Lord on the second ballot.

There is little contact between Marrou and Lord, who at any given time are usually working different parts of the country. They travel by car from event to event, city to city, each driven, tended to, and advanced by a single young assistant. Marrou is in the care of Adam Dick, a slender, shy, well-spoken sophomore at the University of Texas in Austin who wears his blond hair in a pony tail and dresses in neat Italian-cut suits. Lord's Girl Friday is Alic Franklor, an enthusiastic, talkative, warmly charming metalworking major who's president of the Libertarian Society at the University of Georgia in Athens and who has turned the rear end of her white Nissan Sentra into a showcase for Libertarian bumper stickers and rock-band poster art.

The candidates and their drivers are obviously fond of each other. Marrou describes Adam as open, friendly, and unsectarian. He hopes that these qualities will be more prominent in the libertarian movement of the future. Lord swears, perhaps sincerely, that the folk-rock tapes Alic plays on the road have won her over to the musical art of Toad.

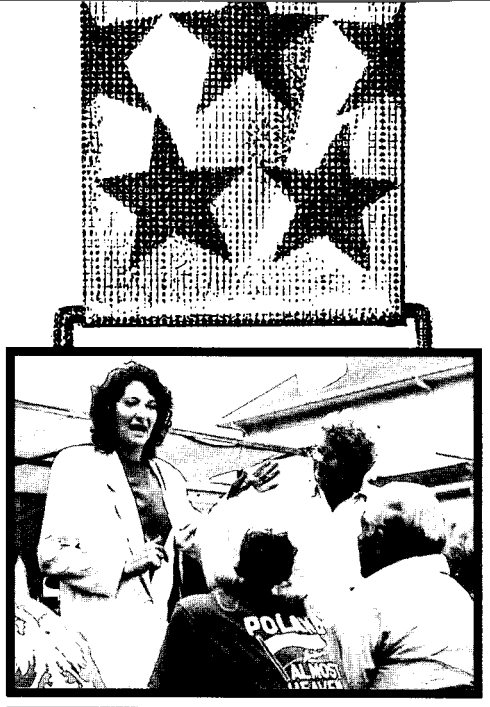
Inside these vehicles of idealistic dissent and new politics, criss-crossing the country under the protection of their blithe youth-culture icons, spirits often run incongruously low.

Lord, newly married, misses her husband and dog and, having just moved to Atlanta so he could take up a new job as president of a think tank, wonders anxiously what line of work awaits her when the campaign is over. Her days are filled with the stress of having to cope with an unending stream of new people and situations. She is acutely aware of the possibilities for disaster lurking in her schedule. Reviewing the plan for the day with the chairman of the Suffolk County L.P., Lord peremptorily nixes a mall walk-through when she learns her host hasn't cleared the event with the mall's management. She explains that an uncleared walk-through in an Arizona mall earlier in the year led to her eviction by security forces, with the media picking up the story. The campaign was embarrassed and she felt humiliated.

Behind the anxiety about events and logistics lies a cer-

tain diffidence about meeting the general public. Lord readily concedes she isn't the type to kiss babies (she's done so only once in the campaign, as a stunt). Walking through a large Polish street festival in rural Long Island, she seems more interested in the dogs we pass than in their owners.

Every once in a while, however, she gathers up her resolve and begins introducing herself to members of the passing throng. Many hurry on, but those who stop to chat are soon captivated. The candidate has long, lively conversations in the wind and rain with a black-leather-clad motorcyclist (they talk about helmet laws) and a heavily bearded clammer (local clam beds are being wrecked by the runoff from the municipal road system). In these open-air events as well as in formal appearances, she lights up—and makes human contact—whenever she is able to talk about substantive topics of mutual interest.



Lord campaigns at a Polish festival.

LORD STRESSES IDEAS AND POLICIES; MARROU AROUSES EMOTION.

For Marrou, in his fifth campaign and second national effort, the physical and psychic demands of day-to-day electioneering are no sweat. A professional politician by now, he mixes as easily and cheerfully as he feels like. He, too, is lonely, however. Several times in my days tagging along he speaks longingly of his girlfriend, a talk-show host in Illinois. (Marrou, four times divorced, describes himself as "in between marriages.")

What bugs Marrou—and, between events, he sometimes seems grumpy—isn't the campaigning but his lack of control over the process and his dependence on people—from L.P. leaders to journalists—who, as he experiences it, show him no respect. He is in frequent conflict with the campaign steering committee over the concept and particulars of the campaign, he reports, and the issues of humor and his desire to maximize the use of TV are among the points of contention.

The candidate is also in a standing rage over journalists who dwell on the questions of why he runs and whether he can win. Marrou says that discrimination against political minorities, expressed by an insistent denigration of their chances of success and a refusal to take their ideas seriously, is the last great unremedied form of bias in America. If I were a black or a woman applying for a job, he expostulates, no one in this day and age would dream of sitting on the other side of the desk and asking me, in a dismissive tone of voice, why I, as a black or woman, was bothering to apply, and what made me think I had a chance of being hired here, and why I imagined that anyone would be the least bit interested in my qualifications and ideas. Journalists may not realize it, he adds, but they're doing something precisely analogous when they dismiss me as a minor candidate with deviant views and negligible chances.

Intensifying Marrou's backstage anger is his bitter brush with the Character Issue thanks to a series of charges brought this spring by his campaign manager. Without warning, the members of the Libertarian National Committee in April received a 14-page letter, with supporting documents, alleging, among a long list of complaints, that Marrou had failed to pay some small private obligations, profited from the sale of land to an Alaska municipal authority while in a position to influence its decision to make the purchase, used a campaign credit card inappropriately, and fallen behind in child-support payments. Marrou vigorously rejects the charges, saying that most are innocent acts taken out of context (his bills eventually got paid, and he was unemployed when he missed some of the child-support payments; his ex-wife didn't bring a complaint) and the rest are lies. The LNC investigated the charges in a day-long executive session and decided against asking Marrou to withdraw as candidate.

Marrou is still shaken by the attack. "I thought it would be fun to run for president. I thought being a candidate would be something I'd feel proud of," he says ruefully. Before the charges, he adds, he'd considered the man who became his accuser to be his best friend. So far, the story hasn't been picked up by the general press.

Like Lord, Marrou, currently between jobs, wonders what will happen in his life after November. He rules out another run for the White House and expresses interest in a television career, perhaps hosting a public-affairs talk show using humor and satire. It sounds like a good idea to me—Nancy Lord would also be good on the tube—and for what it's worth, I tell Andre I'll be happy to get him together with a public-affairs TV programming entrepreneur I know. In the meantime, emboldened by my campaign-trail experiences, this fall I guess I'll break with my lifelong pattern of voting for major-party candidates and pull the lever next to the names of these two interesting, intelligent, spirited bearers of a venerable political message that really does have something to offer a nation that has strayed a long way from the ideals it started off with and finds itself sorely troubled as a result.

Contributing Editor Paul H. Weaver is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution. His forthcoming book is News and the Culture of Lying, *to be published in 1993 by The Free Press.*

ALIC FRANKLOR

'96 PEERS

BY JOHN HOOD

REPUBLICAN PARTIES

Why are we wasting so much ink on this year's presidential election? It's really not that important. If George Bush wins re-election, his second term will likely be one of drift and frustration. He'll still face a Democratic Congress intent on raising taxes, regulating business, and pandering to interest groups. Bush won't fight; he'll cave—and perhaps, as in the case of the regulatory initiatives enacted during his first term, he'll do even more than that.

If Bill Clinton wins, his budget-busting "investment" agenda and higher taxes will only weaken the country's economic health, while his Carteresque foreign- and social-policy miscues will likely lead to widespread public dismay and even...malaise. High inflation, interest rates, and unemployment will remind voters of another decade, when a lackluster Republican moderate lost his bid for re-election to a self-professed Democratic reformer and Southern governor—whose presidential term became a fiasco. In 1980, that sequence of events led to an exciting, albeit short-lived, political revolution. Could it happen again?

The 1996 campaign has already begun, and Republicans are searching for a new Ronald Reagan to rally around. At the August convention in Houston, a host of Gipper wannabes pushed and shoved their way into the Republican huddle, trying desperately to get the attention of the party's faithful fans.

Some, such as Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas, were obvious about it: He sponsored receptions at the convention for delegations from early primary states. Others, such as Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp, played a more traditional, demure role, shrugging off media questions about 1996 with a sly smile and wink at the television cameras.

Gramm's candor is refreshing (he told one reporter that "anybody who has ever been elected to city council who tells you they haven't thought about being president is not telling the truth"), but Kemp's act drew better reviews. In an Associated Press survey of delegates to the convention, one-third said they'd support Kemp in 1996. Gramm's 5 percent consisted largely of the Texas delegation, and Dan Quayle's 9 percent was Midwesterners and Bush loyalists.

The struggle for leadership of the post-Bush GOP will be fought out among rising stars who enjoy the support of like-minded, enthusiastic activists. These presidential aspirants are divided into several rival camps.

The Supply-Siders. Kemp heads this group, as he has since it formed in the late 1970s. Among its constituents are current and former *Wall Street Journal* editorialists, prominent neoconservatives such as Irving Kristol, and "progressive conservatives" who are strongly pro-immigration, pro–free trade, committed to minority outreach and the "Conservative War on Poverty," and, above all, optimistic in their thinking and rhetoric. Many GOP activists joined this club in 1980 and are still waiting to try their pet ideas.

Unfortunately, Supply-Siders rarely exhibit as much antipathy for government spending as they do for taxation, which is why Kemp's HUD budget requests have been massive and why his supporters are more interested in reforming government programs than in eliminating them. During the 1988 Republican primaries, Kemp ridiculed fellow GOP contender Pete du Pont, a former Delaware governor, for advocating privatization and significant federal budget cuts and for flirting with "libertarianism."

Kemp and his supporters in the conservative movement's policy magazines and think tanks view a sizable federal role in America's economy as inevitable. They argue that instead of trying to cut the size of government conservatives should make sure that government services are delivered efficiently. "The Democrats' New Covenant is not new...it's not change," Kemp said in his convention address. "It doesn't put people first; it puts government first. It doesn't empower people; it empowers bureaucracy." Kemp's real target isn't government interference in markets but *bureaucratic* interference. Eliminating government's bureaucratic impulses is a wonderful goal, but even a "lean and mean" federal government can be a menace.

The Budget Cutters. Gramm leads a strikingly different faction of fiscal conservatives who view government's share of the economy, not just high tax rates, as America's major problem. Coauthor of numerous spending-restraint

HENRY PAYNE

laws, Gramm is more likely to call for the end of farm supports, mass-transit funding, business subsidies, and other high-ticket items than are Republicans with executive-branch experience, who (like Kemp) often lose their distaste for government power once they get to exercise some of it.

The difference between these two groups is clearest on the issue of the federal budget deficit. Supply-Siders argue that the deficit isn't overly large, that it doesn't have disastrous effects on economic performance (at least in the short term), and that economic growth, stimulated by tax cuts, is the best way to reduce deficits and pay off government debt in the long run. Supply-Siders truly believe the old conservative adage that government can and should be run like a business; firms, after all, regularly go into debt to accomplish important objectives.

But Budget Cutters rebut the "government as business" analogy. A business cannot inflate the currency to reduce the value of its debts, nor is it vulnerable to the interest-group politics and public-choice dynamics that make government spending so difficult to control. It follows, then, that debt in the public sector is different from debt in the private sector and that we must employ extraordinary measures (such as a balanced-budget amendment or constitutional spending impediments) to avoid accumulating too much public debt.

One further difference between the Supply-Siders and the Budget Cutters is that while Kemp is solidly at the head of the former group, Gramm is but one leader of the latter. Another Budget Cutter with a shot at the presidential nomination is Dick Cheney, currently Bush's secretary of defense but formerly House minority whip and a careful, reliable critic of federal spending. Cheney is almost universally respected among GOP conservatives and scored some public-relations points during the Persian Gulf War.

The Culture Warriors. While Kemp and Gramm focus on their respective economic prescriptions, the Culture Warriors frequently view economic problems as only manifestations of deeper social trends. Values, not incentives, trap the poor in the welfare cycle, so jobs and opportunities (created either by Kemp's tax cuts or Gramm's regulatory and spending restraint) won't solve the problem. These Republicans, many of whom are recent party converts, care much more about social issues such as abortion, school prayer, and gay rights than they do about free-market economics—if they believe in the free market at all.

The real leader of the Culture Warriors is Pat Buchanan, and the differences between Bennett's and Buchanan's calls to battle couldn't be more striking.

The best (that is, most thoughtful and diplomatic) spokesman for the Culture Warriors is neoconservative Bill Bennett, former education secretary under Reagan. Bennett argues for public morality while retaining respect for liberty. "This is a free country," Bennett said in his Houston speech. "Within very broad limits people may behave as they wish. And yet we believe some ways of living are better than others—better because they bring more meaning to our lives, to the lives of others, and to our fragile, fallible human condition." Bennett believes that government can encourage these "better ways of living" without prohibiting alternatives or driving political "wedges" between groups.

The real leader of the Culture Warriors is commentator and Bush primary challenger Pat Buchanan, and the differences between Bennett's and Buchanan's calls for cultural war couldn't be more striking. Buchanan's vitriolic speech at the Houston convention (in prime time right before Reagan's) was easily the most electrifying event of the week—not surprisingly, since evangelicals and religious fundamentalists made up about 40 percent of the delegates. Many of these activists, who control a dozen or so state parties already, trace their political careers to Pat Robertson's 1988 campaign, a nonstarter that nonetheless brought new people into the world of GOP activism.

Ralph Reed, head of Robertson's Christian Coalition, says the TV preacher's 1988 effort "will be for evangelicals what Barry Goldwater's run was for conservatives in 1964: a defeat that provided the seeds of ultimate triumph." If so, the Republican Party will look much different after that triumph: neo-isolationist, suspicious of free trade and immigrants, and more intent than ever on using government power to inhibit divorce, hound homosexuals, purge sex education from schools, and banish "secular humanism" from public life.

While Bennett's remarks earned praise from virtually every GOP leader (and even some liberal pundits), Buchanan's speech polarized Republicans into pro- and anti-Pat camps. Pat Robertson loved it, while Kemp said of the Buchanan manifesto that "if that were my party, I wouldn't want to be in it."

Activists more interested in economic policy than social issues have tended to ignore the Culture Warriors, but they do so in the future only at their own peril. This group is passionate and growing, and of all the groups in the loose Republican confederation, the most up for grabs in 1996. First, they have few historical ties with the GOP. Second, neither Buchanan nor Bennett is likely to be the presidential nominee; neither has held elective office. So watch for other candidates to try to outbid each other to attract Culture Warriors to their camp. The question is: Will these new suitors sound more like Bennett or Buchanan?

The GOP Governors. Their programs and ideas may be different, but these potential candidates share similar experience and prospects. Republican governors tend to emphasize a relatively new set of institutional reforms, such as privatization, term limits, and legal reform.

They also share three major advantages over Republican candidates from

the administration or the Congress. First, they have the mystique of being chief executives—they have "run something" before. Second, they preside over some of America's "laboratories of democracy" and can point to pet projects in their states, such as welfare reform or trade policy, to dramatize their leadership potential. Lastly, they reside outside the Beltway. In other words, they have plausible deniability.

Aside from these similarities, however, the GOP Govs are a diverse lot of thinkers and tinkerers. Massachusetts Gov. William Weld could have been an ideal standard-bearer of a new Republican Party, rooted in both fiscal conservatism and social tolerance, if he had not wholeheartedly embraced environmentalist quackery.

South Carolina Gov. Carroll Campbell made quite a name for himself as a Bush surrogate and booster before and during the convention, though he raised the ire of GOP leaders by speaking so long the first night that he pushed most of Reagan's speech past 11 p.m. on the East Coast. (Ironically, this misstep may have helped Bush in vote-rich California, where Reagan is a hero and 8 p.m. is prime time.)

Campbell's forte is trade policy; he made headlines a month before the convention with the announcement of a new BMW plant in his state. "In South Carolina, 73,000 people go to work each day in businesses that are supported by foreign investment," he said in his speech. He added that threats to free trade, such as Clinton's tax proposals (or protectionism of a Republican variety, though he left that unstated), could destroy the livelihoods of millions of Americans.

Other governors, such as Jim Edgar of Illinois, John Engler of Michigan, and Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin, got their own moments at the convention and talked up their pet issues, such as budget restraint (Engler) and school choice (Thompson).

Each Republican governor enjoys a base of support in his home state and region, with other boosters sprinkled around the GOP political circuit. Four years is a long time. It's long enough for anyone to catapult into national prominence—especially if Clinton wins and the GOP Governors suddenly become leaders of the opposition. New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, former Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis, and, of course, Clinton himself demonstrate how helpful such a position can be in attracting national attention.

The Bush Brigade. A more apt, but less alliterative, name for this group would be the Bush Platoon, since it's likely to be rather small. And of its potential leaders, only former Secretary of State James Baker, longtime Bush handler and notorious pragmatist, would and might run as an heir to the Bush mantle. Believe it or not, he actually leads in very early polls of 1996 prospects in New Hampshire. (Another politician often thought of as presidential material by Easterners, California Gov. Pete Wilson, could easily run as a gubernatorial version of George Bush—which is why he won't be much of a candidate.)

What strengths might Baker bring to the 1996 contest? If Bush wins this year and accomplishes something, say in foreign policy, then Baker could essentially run on "competence, not ideology." If Bush wins this year and then struggles through the next four years, Baker wouldn't be left with much but name recognition. If Bush loses, Baker can forget it.

The Heir Unapparent. The person most obviously positioned to benefit from eight years of George Bush—Bush's vice president—has demonstrated some real ability as a consensus builder and leader. Dan Quayle's three areas of emphasis nicely straddle the party's ideological divide: business regulation (satisfying the Supply-Siders and the Budget Cutters), family values and TV criticism (thrilling the Culture Warriors), and reform of government and legal institutions (appealing to the same reformist base as the GOP Govs).

Unfortunately, Dan Quayle is a national joke. That's not going to change. And when Quayle answered speculation about the next presidential race with "Let us see George Bush reelected this November, and then we'll talk about 1994," he didn't help matters.

As with all such attempts, the above demarcation of 1996 GOP contenders exaggerates their differences a bit. Jack Kemp and Phil Gramm are anti-abortion and talk up family values, Pat Buchanan attacks business regulation, and James Baker occasionally talks about ideas. The point is that each person emphasizes a different segment of the old, and somewhat tattered, Reagan coalition. More important, some issues—such as foreign policy, immigration, trade, and tolerance—really do divide Republicans as well as former Reagan Democrats and independents.

The party will have to make a conscious choice between two possible visions of America: stasis, where government tries to protect its citizens from economic competition from abroad and societal change from within; and dynamism, where government's job is to set and enforce the rules of discourse and exchange through which economic and social change occurs—rather than trying to head change off at the pass.

The trick for all these Republican presidential aspirants will be to refashion a coalition of squabbling groups around a common theme, as Reagan did with anticommunism and antigovernment rhetoric. Perhaps the task is impossible. It will certainly require attention to uncommitted segments of the electorate, such as optimistic and forward-thinking young people, economically conservative but socially tolerant Baby Boomers, and new Americans from Latin America and Asia—all of whose sentiments currently lie somewhere between Pat Robertson's Republican Party and Jesse Jackson's Democratic Party.

A candidate stressing low taxes, low spending, economic dynamism, social tolerance, a coherent post–Cold War foreign policy, and, above all, optimism and progress could form a new ruling coalition. So far, though, the Republican best bets for 1996 still remain only lowly pretenders to Ronald Reagan's throne.

Contributing Editor John Hood is editor of Carolina Journal *and a columnist for* Spectator *magazine in Raleigh.*

BUBBA HUBBUB

BY JOHN SHELTON REED

As soon as Bill Clinton locked up the nomination, those of us who write about the South for a living started getting phone calls from reporters asking about the meaning of it all, and when Clinton picked young Al Gore as his vice-presidential candidate the pace really picked up. The last time this happened was 1976, when Jimmy Carter's nomination provoked a rash of omigod-what's-going-on-down-there stories in the press. Here we go again.

Clinton and Gore are about as housebroken as Southerners can get and still be elected to statewide office.

This time, though, the questions are different. This year they want to know whether Clinton and Gore are "really" Southerners. (Nobody asked that about Jimmy.) I confess that I haven't been able to resist ripping off a *Wall Street Journal* line from the 1988 primaries: Al Gore, the *Journal* observed then, was less a Southern candidate than a Washington political consultant's idea of a Southern candidate.

But that's not fair. It's true that Gore's notoriously wooden oratorical style was definitely at odds with the Southern tradition, and he was (as a friend of mine claims to have seen with his own eyes) the kind of guy who puts on his suit coat to go to a barbecue. But Gore's loosened up some since 1988. What's more, whether I like it or not, he really is a Southerner, of a kind, and Clinton even more so.

Not to put too fine a point on it, both men are Southern yuppies, a tribe as numerous as it is little known outside the South. The trouble is that very few non-Southerners have a repertoire of stereotypes adequate to deal with this relatively new feature of the South's social landscape. So we get nonsense like calling Clinton and Gore the "Double Bubba" ticket. Aside from the fact that Southerners themselves seldom use *bubba* as a common noun, the social type that word identifies is not what Clinton and Gore are.

Bubba is simply the latest incarnation of a well-established Southern white male type, what the press, writing about Carter and his associates in 1976, identified and chronicled as the "good old boy." (Daniel Hundley, writing in 1859, called him the "yeoman," and if you don't believe Hundley was talking about the exact same creature, read a fascinating book called *Southern Folk, Plain and Fancy*. I wrote it.) Since Yankee reporters are seldom attuned to Southern social distinctions, however, "good old boy" in their hands stopped being a perfectly useful label for a particular sort of working-class Southerner and wound up being applied to any male with even a trace of Southern accent. The same thing has happened to *bubba* this year.

Look, I don't have the space even to brief you on Bubba's identifying marks, but take this down: Bubba does not belong to a country club. He listens to country songs about not belonging to a country club.

Southern country clubs are, on the other hand, full of glad-handing, presentable guys pretty much like Bill Clinton—maybe not as smart, driven, liberal, or libidinous, but otherwise much the same. Southern college fraternities even used to have an expression for it: Clinton is a classic "face man."

So, sure, Clinton and Gore are Southerners. But they're housebroken—about as housebroken as Southerners can get these days and still be elected to statewide office. I mean, Clinton actually claims that his favorite book is *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. This may be just a pitch for the Hispanic vote, but I'll bet it's the kind of overreaching you sometimes find among the culturally insecure Southern upper-middle class. (It's far better to say that your favorite book is *Blasting for Bass* and let your questioner try to figure out if you're joking.) And while it's true that both Clinton and Gore are Baptists, I can't believe that Clinton, anyway, is Jimmy Carter's kind of Baptist—that is, the real thing. Can you seriously imagine a President Clinton praying for guidance, or asking foreign heads of state about their religious condition, or lecturing federal employees about living in sin? If I'm wrong I apologize, but Clinton strikes me as being Baptist the way, say, John Kennedy was Catholic.

Given all this, it's ironic when Jay Leno makes jokes about "trying to get that all-important *Hee Haw* vote." Those of us who enjoy ethnic jokes at other groups' expense really can't complain (although we can point out that it's roughly like saying Jesse Jackson had to

CLINTON/GORE '92 COMMITTEE

be placated lest the all-important watermelon vote be lost). Still, that crack has the remarkable property of annoying both Southerners who like *Hee Haw* and Southerners who don't.

And when Republicans engage in similar badinage, they win no friends for their party or their candidates. Dan Schnur, chief spokesman for California Gov. Pete Wilson, might as well have been on the Clinton-Gore payroll when he said that "Bill Clinton and Al Gore fit in about as well in California as the Beverly Hillbillies. They're like Granny and Ellie May sitting on the back of the truck." When that kind of stuff gets reported back in Carolina, it makes even me want to vote for them.

So why did the Democrats nominate two Southerners? Well, I guess they couldn't help nominating Clinton after he won all those primaries, but why did they go along with putting another Southerner on the ticket? I think former Dukakis campaign manager Susan Estrich gave a pretty good answer at the convention when she revised Henry Clay for the 1990s: She's tired of being right, she said; she wants to win instead.

Think about it. Since 1945 the Democrats have won with candidates from Texas, Georgia, and the border state of Missouri (whether Kennedy actually won depends on your view of those Illinois returns), and they've lost with candidates from Illinois (twice), Minnesota (twice), South Dakota, and Massachusetts. See a pattern? Even flatworms can learn with reinforcement like that. (Jimmy Carter's 1980 re-election loss just shows that geography isn't everything.) What's more, a new book called *The Vital South*, by political scientists Merle and Earl Black, argues persuasively that it's almost impossible to win a presidential election these days if you don't carry the South and strongly implies that enough folks elsewhere share "Southern" views that you can probably win if you do carry it.

If you buy that, Gore becomes an obvious choice for the vice-presidential nomination. An all-Southern ticket won't automatically carry the South, but it's a good start. In the first place, Gore doesn't hurt Clinton in Dixie, as most of the available non-Southerners would have. In addition, once you get past the fact that Clinton and Gore are both from the South, they're quite different. From a Southern point of view, Gore levels out the potholes in Clinton's résumé very well.

You say Clinton dodged the draft? Gore's a vet. Clinton waffled on war with Iraq? Gore didn't. Clinton's too cozy with the Yankees and "special interests" who run the Democratic Party these days? Gore ran against Dukakis and Jesse Jackson in the 1988 primaries. Clinton's wife is a lawyer who puts down Tammy Wynette? Gore's is a blonde homemaker who gets fierce only when her cubs are threatened by degenerate rappers and heavy-metal scum. It's not exactly that Gore is the Good Twin, the Anti-Clinton; he's more like the responsible older brother to young Billy, the scamp.

When Republicans say, "Bill Clinton and Al Gore fit in about as well in California as the Beverly Hillbillies—they're like Granny and Ellie May sitting on the back of the truck," it makes even me want to vote for the Democrats.

It's just a bonus that Gore also firms up Clinton's ties to several traditional Democratic groups, concentrated largely outside the South. Does organized labor prefer even Jerry Brown to Clinton? Gore's a strong labor man, like his daddy before him. Does Clinton's lust to keep jobs in Arkansas give him a suspect environmental record? Gore's unreadable book reassures the greens. You say the Permanent Government sees Clinton as a small-state governor with no D.C. experience? Gore grew up in Washington. Clinton didn't inhale? Gore did.

Sure, some old-timey Northern Democrats are nervous and resentful about the new Southern ascendancy. My buddy Doug was at the convention and overheard a couple of delegates discussing in an elevator how uneasy it made them to have to vote for two Southern Baptists; when he asked what if their party had nominated two Jews and he'd said in his accent that he was nervous about that, a chilly silence descended. It was fun, too, to watch Mario Cuomo try to keep from sneering each of the many times he said "Arkansas" in his convention speech. But what are these bigots going to do, vote for Bush-Quayle? Come on. Most of the pros, at least, seem to agree with Susan Estrich. They'll try to keep their regional prejudices under wraps and hope they get some appointments.

Anyway, it will be interesting to see how the Democrats' Southern strategy plays out. Clinton and Gore are demonstrably the kind of Democrats who can win elections in the South because, after all, they've won some. It's hard to imagine a Democratic ticket that would run better in the South, unless maybe Gore and Clinton switched places. Is that good enough?

Well, let's do the numbers. First, despite a considerable degree of social and cultural conservatism, Southern blacks are still reliably and overwhelmingly Democratic. With or without Jesse Jackson's enthusiasm, Clinton and Gore will do as well there as any white candidates could. They'll also collect the votes of the small if noisy contingent of moderate-to-liberal white Southern Democrats (many of them migrants from other parts). On the other hand, most Southern wealth is too new to be apologetic, so upper-middle-class Southern whites are almost reflexively Republican these days. These voters will stick with Bush, even though many think he's too liberal. The few remaining die-hard Dixiecrats won't vote Democratic either.

As the Black brothers point out in their book, that leaves the choice up to the large body of conservative Democrats and independent voters, many of them white working-class folk (Bubba and his

wife, if you insist). These folks voted for Bush in 1988 but tend to be seriously put out with him these days. Many flirted with Perot last spring, and some of them may be ready to return to the party of their ancestors if it makes even the slightest pretense of returning to them. By running Clinton and Gore, it's making that pretense.

Now, it's a safe bet that Bill Clinton won't get most of their votes. But he doesn't have to: a strong minority will do. In early August, a South Carolina poll showed Clinton trailing Bush by a double-digit margin among whites—this at a time when Clinton led nationally by more than 30 points and was even ahead of Bush in Orange County, California. But that same poll showed Clinton with a comfortable lead in South Carolina overall, thanks to the lopsided support of black voters.

It was fun to watch Cuomo try to keep from sneering each time he said "Arkansas" in his convention speech.

The Democrats' problem lately has been that they haven't come anywhere even near the 30 percent or 40 percent of the white vote that they need to win. Even leaving aside the possibility of some "October surprise," it's hard to say whether this ticket can turn that around. But Merle Black told me in August about a Democratic Party worker who was handing out bumper stickers at a rally in South Carolina. "This year," he said, "they're going to put those things on the outside of their cars."

John Shelton Reed is William Rand Kenan Jr. Professor of Sociology and director of the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. His most recent book is Whistling Dixie: Dispatches from the South.

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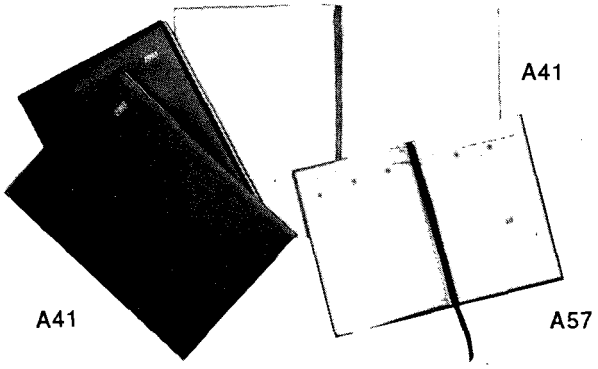

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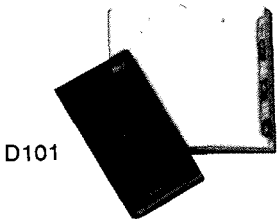

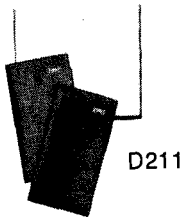

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DIN OF LIES

BY GLENN YAGO

It has become fashionable to attack the 1980s as a decade of greed, selfishness, and excess. The conventional wisdom: In the '80s a handful of would-be robber barons and junk-bond salesmen looted corporate coffers, leaving employees jobless and investors holding worthless paper. And the criminal mastermind behind much of this looting was junk-bond pioneer Michael Milken.

Everyone from *Spy* to congressional leaders has taken shots at Milken, blaming him for everything from the S&L crisis to homelessness. James B. Stewart, the page-one editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, sums up the popular wisdom about Milken and the 1980s in his book *Den of Thieves*.

Rather piously, Stewart begins with the Word: expulsion of "all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of them that sold doves" and "ye have made it a den of thieves." Then there is a quick recitation, chapter and verse, of the conventional wisdom on bust-up, shut-down junk-bond takeovers, and a warning that we could risk missing the big picture. During this crime wave, the ownership of large corporations changed hands, often forcibly, at a clip never before witnessed. Thousands of workers lost their jobs, companies loaded up with debt to pay for the deals, profits were sacrificed to pay interest costs on the borrowings, and even so, many companies were eventually forced into bankruptcies and restructurings.

No facts, no figures, no presentation of economic evidence for many of the supposed crimes against mankind and the U.S. economy. Such is the case against Milken, junk bonds, and the 1980s. Let us, then, consider the evidence.

While ownership change in the 1980s was extensive and fast, it was not, as the conventional wisdom expressed by Stewart would have it, "at a clip never before witnessed." In each year of the 1980s there were approximately 2,000 deals. By comparison, between 3,000 and 6,000 deals were done each year during the 1967-1974 merger-and-acquisition wave.

The deconglomeration wave of the 1980s, which undid inefficient and poor acquisitions of decades past, was hardly sweeping. The leveraged-buyout wave affected only 12 percent of U.S. firms. At its peak in 1985, the junk-bond market had extended credit to fewer than 2,000 firms previously excluded from the capital markets.

Not surprisingly, the end of job creation in America has closely tracked the collapse of the junk-bond market; there have been no new jobs created since '89.

The merger waves of 1898-1908 and 1922-1930 each represented a larger proportion of total corporate assets than the restructurings in the 1980s. In fact, in the 1980s, aggregate industrial concentration of sales, employment, and assets actually declined.

Those who attack the 1980s also hold that the buyouts forced debt-laden companies to lay off workers. But the last few years have produced considerable evidence to the contrary. A Bureau of Labor Statistics review of mass layoffs and plant closings found that only 4.4 percent of layoffs and plant closings and 6.6 percent of total jobs lost in the 1980s were cut as a result of business-ownership change.

Using plant-level census data tracking 1,100 manufacturing plants involved in ownership change during 1986-1988, my colleagues and I at the State University of New York at Stony Brook found no evidence that firms that restructured their ownership or finances were more likely to eliminate jobs or shut down factories than others. Detailed studies in New York, New Jersey, and Michigan over the same period found that less than 2 percent of total job loss occurred in firms involved in ownership change or the junk-bond market.

In fact, industries that lost jobs because of foreign competition lost fewer when junk bonds were an element of restructuring. In those declining industries, firms in the junk-bond market retained greater market share and more jobs than their counterparts. After restructuring or new financing, firms actually reversed the patterns of job loss.

During the 1980s, our study showed, firms financed in the noninvestment-grade market experienced job growth at six times the rate of industry overall.

Not surprisingly, then, the end of job creation in America has closely tracked the collapse of the junk-bond market; there have been no new jobs created since 1989. When expansion in the noninvestment-grade growth sector slowed, the largest corporations lost customers, distributors, and suppliers. Without those sources of demand, the Fortune 500 continue to do what they had done in the 1980s: accelerate write-offs and layoffs.

Credit did get more creative, and accessible, in the 1980s. The absolute level of corporate debt creation—the hockey-stick graph we usually see when this story runs in the business press—has increased 12 percent annually since 1983, at a rate one-third faster than in the 1970s.

But credit risks are analyzed relative to something—such as assets, short- or long-term debt, sales, or net interest as a share of gross cash flow. Most of these measures show relatively little change compared to earlier periods of economic expansion. Credit, therefore, essentially leveraged and supported other elements of a corporation's finances to sustain equity growth.

Most attacks on the '80s omit the facts

about bankruptcies and defaults. We know that two-thirds of the distressed credits in the junk-bond market were deals done after 1987, when Michael Milken was, for all practical purposes, benched by the government's investigation. At that time, he was telling anyone who would listen that it was time to deleverage because the cost advantages of debt relative to equity were beginning to reverse.

But with the shutdown of the junk-bond market in the late 1980s, deleveraging was not possible for many companies. Panic selling in the capital markets, tax and regulatory changes, and fear about "junk" companies froze the capital structures and made debt restructuring impossible. As the economy began to contract, companies couldn't pay off debt or sell assets, reverse their growth strategies, or control their cash flow.

Even though default rates of junk-financed companies after 1987 nearly tripled, the number of distressed firms was still only about 10 percent of the total market. Equating the junk-bond market—and Michael Milken's leading role in its development—with the thieving and looting crimes of a few individuals gives the wrong impression, since the numbers simply don't add up.

What really went wrong? We have to go beyond economics to politics and its role in restraining competition. Also pertinent is why economic pioneers who knowingly or not go against established interests sometimes end up fighting range wars with the big ranchers entrenched in corporate headquarters and government agencies.

Prior to the junk-bond market ascendancy, which paralleled the restructuring movement of the 1980s, less than 5 percent of all U.S. companies accessed more than 95 percent of the available public capital, restricting it to big business. Yet many large companies, stuck with spotty economic returns, were disinclined to create new products and increasingly preoccupied with strategic thinking about unloading assets and employees.

These large companies with high credit ratings carried relatively little debt, so their cost of capital was higher than for their Japanese and West European competitors, who were flourishing in U.S. markets and, in turn, helping to eliminate American jobs.

Also, the continuing separation of ownership and control in corporations had created a situation in which the management of the nation's largest businesses owned less than 1 percent of the common stock of their own companies. This led to entrenchment strategies that increased executive compensation, perks, and empire building.

Paradoxically, the companies with the highest returns on capital, fastest rates of market-share and employment growth, and greatest contributions to technological and new-product innovation had the least access to capital. Into this market niche stepped Milken, who, following the tradition of Western movement in U.S. history, lit out for California, built a business, hit the mother lode, and struck it rich.

Until the junk-bond market came along, banks had a headlock on the more-innovative mid-sized American businesses. When the junk-bond market expanded in the 1980s, firm owners and managers leapt at the chance to gain access to growth funds. In a few short years, the junk-bond market generated business loans far in excess of the whole commercial banking sector. Supplying the lowest-cost and most flexible source of capital generated a great deal of money and helped to shift the balance of economic power.

During the 1980s, the logic of extending economic participation through ownership expanded beyond the traditional arenas of housing and agriculture to businesses. New technologies and innovation invigorated newly restructured firms. Moreover, the benefits of corporate restructuring—expanding access to capital, ownership change, and alternative ownership patterns (ESOPs, MBOs, minority- and women-owned firms), and accompanying productivity changes—were the key elements in the surprising junk-bond revolution.

The junk-bond market was a real threat to those 5 percent of companies that had been feasting on 95 percent of the available public capital. Sadly, big business sought and got the retrenchment policy measures that helped bring on the lingering recession.

In retrospect, the restructuring wave of the 1980s has paid off. From 1978 to 1988 the percentage of firms mining a single business segment with increasing success rose from 35.6 percent to 54.3 percent. The trend toward better focus was associated with significantly higher returns to shareholders, improved market share, and better accounting measures of firm performance.

Beyond the $200-billion junk-bond market of the 1980s, other investment markets flourished: venture capital, initial public offerings, and private placements that together peaked at over $466 billion in 1986. Had those investment levels continued through 1990, the economy's capital stock would have grown by $247 billion; nearly 1 million of the jobs lost over the past two years would have been retained; and by conservative estimates, growth firms would have added roughly another 1.6 million jobs. There would have been business-cycle adjustments and market corrections—not one long recession.

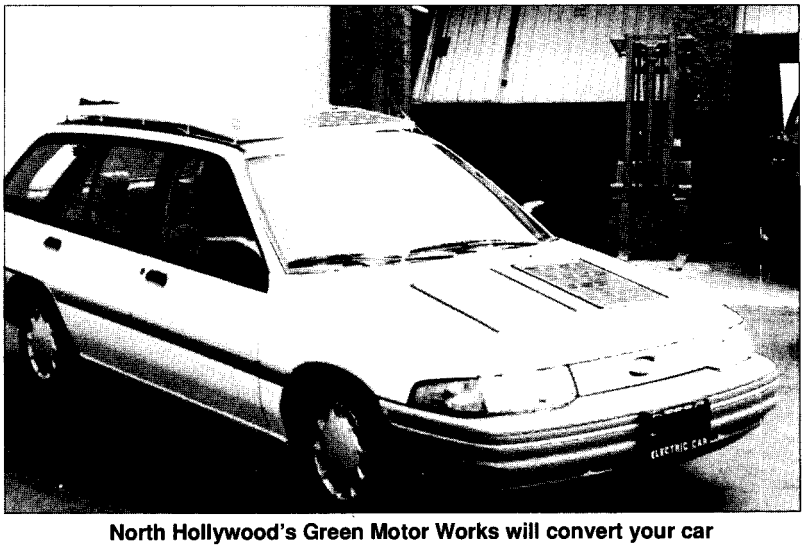
On June 26, 1991, as *Den of Thieves* went to the printer, *The New York Times* ran a front-page story, "A Revival is Seen for 'Junk Bonds' as Market Gains." Despite the taint of negative press, plummeting bond prices, and a regulatory backlash, the market for business loans called junk bonds has roared back from its October 1990 low to a gain of 40 percent. But the market's own phoenix-like redemption does not mean that the growth and expansion of capital access to include more firms, communities, and industries is right around the corner. It won't be, so long as the redlining of American business continues.

Glenn Yago is the director of the Economic Research Bureau at the Harriman School for Management at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, and author of Junk Bonds: How High Yield Securities Restructured Corporate America *(Oxford University Press).*

GREEN MACHINE

BY ELIZABETH LARSON

Parked on the black showroom floor, its silver body shining in the sunlight filtering through the glass-brick windows, the Pontiac Fiero looks like just another sports car. Then I pop the hoods, front and back. Where the engine should be are hefty green batteries, and instead of empty trunk space, there are more batteries: 18 six-volt Trojan golf-cart batteries in all. Not much room for groceries. I ask if I can take one for a spin.



North Hollywood's Green Motor Works will convert your car to electricity for $15,000 or so, making it greener but less practical.

Richard Houser, sales manager for Green Motor Works, the country's first electric-car dealership, leads me outside to a white Ford Escort—a comfortable five-seater, he points out. "Put on your seatbelt," he jokes as we strap ourselves in. "We're going to Mach 1." I step on the clutch, shift into first, and with a gentle purr we're off, cruising the streets of North Hollywood.

There are no surprises and not much excitement either. Patrick Bedard put it well in a recent issue of *Car & Driver*: "Ever drive a golf cart? Well, imagine it with doors." I ask how much Green Motor Works would charge to convert my Honda Accord to electricity. About $15,000, I'm told. (Batteries included.) Even at such prices, Houser assures me, Green Motor Works has had plenty of customers since it opened on March 26, although he won't reveal how many conversions the company has sold.

The dealership hopes to get a jump on the electric-car market that the California Air Resources Board is trying to regulate into existence. California's clean-air program, which nine East Coast states, Texas, and Illinois may also adopt, sets annual quotas for the production of cars run on alternative fuels, beginning with the 1993 models. It divides "ultraclean" cars into four categories with progressively lower emission levels, determined by grams of pollution emitted per mile. "Zero-emission" (electric) vehicles must account for 2 percent of cars built by 1998 and 10 percent by 2003.

Smog-control officials and environmentalists argue that the California regulations, stricter than the 1990 Clean Air Act, are necessary to reduce urban smog and halt global warming. Instead of ushering in a new era of clean cars, however, California's plan for electric vehicles is likely to impose extra costs on consumers and automakers while doing little to protect the environment. The program provides no incentive for drivers to give up their conventional internal-combustion vehicles. Given the current state of battery technology, electric cars are much more expensive and far less practical than gasoline-powered cars—making them less than attractive to most car buyers.

Which brings us to the little flaw in the ARB's big plans: The quotas (a term board officials try to avoid) apply to the production rather than the sale of cars. How can regulators ensure that consumers cooperate with their program—that, say, 1 out of every 10 cars sold in California by 2003 is electric? Quite simply, they can't. So the onus for meeting the quotas falls on the automakers. In effect, the quotas are a tax on car production, and the car companies know it.

Although the ARB gives carmakers some leeway in meeting the production quotas for other car categories, the quotas for electric cars are mandatory. The automakers wanted it that way. "It equalizes all of the efforts within the industry, and it doesn't put one car manufacturer at a competitive advantage or disadvantage," says ARB spokesman Bill Sessa. "What the carmakers did not want was somebody building a certain number of electric cars and somebody else just kind of kicking back and not doing it at all." In other words, the car companies know a new tax when they see one. And if they can't sell all the electric cars they are required to build at prices high enough to cover their costs, they will take losses. These losses may show up in higher prices for other cars, lower wages for employees, smaller returns for shareholders, or less investment in product development.

Electric vehicles do have their strong points. They're quiet and, aside from watering and changing the batteries, they require little maintenance. But slow acceleration is a common complaint, and the batteries leave a lot to be desired. For example, G.M.'s Impact, scheduled for sale in the mid-'90s, runs on a pack of 32 10-volt lead-acid batteries that weighs 870 pounds and needs to be replaced every two or three years at a cost of $1,500 to $2,000.

The Impact's practical driving range is

ELIZABETH LARSON

about 80 miles, and it takes two to three hours to recharge, says G.M. spokeswoman Lynn Pasquale, although "the best way to charge it is to plug it in at night and let it trickle charge over a long period of time, five or six or seven hours." The cars sold at Green Motor Works in North Hollywood are even less powerful: They have a driving range of 40 to 60 miles and take 8 to 10 hours to recharge. If you use your car just for short trips to work and around town, these limitations might not bother you. But if you commute a long distance, like to take road trips, or want to be prepared for unexpected travel, an electric car is probably not for you.

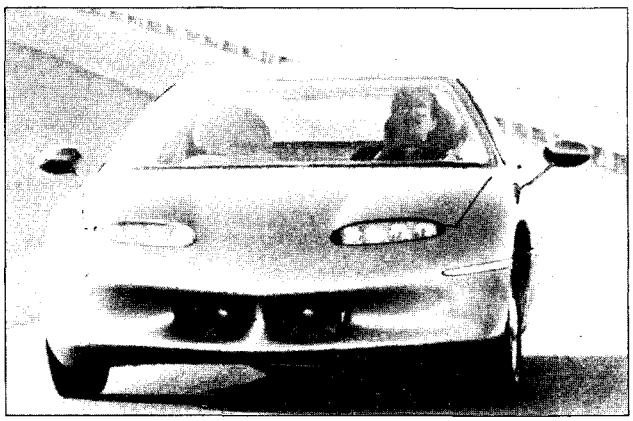
The need for better batteries is the main obstacle to a thriving electric-car market. Major automakers such as G.M. have been trying to overcome this obstacle for decades. Marcel Halberstadt, director of the environmental department at the Motor Vehicle Manufacturing Association, says development of batteries "has proceeded at a very slow pace not because the desire has not been there, but just because this is an extremely difficult technical problem."

Aside from their inconvenience, electric cars cost more to buy. The first electric car to roll off the mass-production line will probably be the LA301, from the small Swedish manufacturer Clean Air Transport, expected by 1993. At $25,000, the LA301 will cost about twice as much as a gasoline-powered car of the same size and class. Pasquale, the G.M. spokeswoman, says that the Impact will probably also be more expensive than a similar gasoline-powered vehicle, at least initially.

The MVMA's Halberstadt predicts that most automakers will sell electric cars below cost in the beginning just so they can put the machines within the price range of the average buyer. "It's only over a long time period that the manufacturers may recover their investments," he says.

Green Motor Works is not making a lot of money, Houser admits: "The profit margins aren't real high. There's a lot of problems starting up in this business right now in terms of actually getting these vehicles on the road at a price that the public will accept....The cost of the components is high, and in order to keep the cars at a reasonable price we're not taking a lot of profit."

Despite the higher prices and other drawbacks of electric cars, public willingness to buy them once they are built "is not a concern at all," says the ARB's Sessa. He cites polls showing enthusiasm for electric cars.



G.M.'s Impact, America's first mass-produced electric car, will have a practical driving range of 80 miles.

But automakers don't share his optimism. A Nissan official says car manufacturers "have no idea" how they will get consumers to overlook the money question and cooperate with the vehicle quotas by giving up conventional cars. Another industry spokesman says the impact of the production quotas on the automobile industry is "too touchy" for him to comment on.

"It may be that the advocates are right, that there are enough just purely socially conscious people out there to buy these cars," says Ted Orme, director of public relations at the National Automobile Dealers Association. "But our experience—although it's limited with alternative-fuel vehicles—has been that buyers, when it's time to part with their hard-earned money, want a car that's as good as what they can get already."

Activists and regulators argue that the disadvantages of electric cars are outweighed by their environmental benefits. Even taking into account the pollution emitted by the power plants that generate the electricity they run on, electric cars are a lot cleaner than gasoline-powered cars. The problem is, unless they are motivated by environmental idealism, consumers have no reason to care. The ARB's quotas do not change this basic fact.

And because it's relying on legal mandates rather than consumer demand to drive the market for electric cars, the ARB has no way of knowing whether its solution is more cost-effective than other ways of reducing pollution. It's true enough that substituting electric cars for conventional cars would reduce air pollution. But regulators overlook the effects of the de facto tax the quotas impose on car companies, and they ignore the possibility of getting more pollution reduction for the same cost.

For example, research by University of Denver chemist Donald Stedman indicates that a small minority of poorly tuned cars are responsible for most automotive pollution. (See "Going Mobile," August/September 1990.) By identifying these "gross polluters," a mobile emissions testing system like the one developed by Stedman could clean the air much more efficiently than electric-car quotas would. Such an enforcement system would identify and penalize polluters (and, presumably, force them to clean up their emissions). It would give drivers an incentive to pollute less—and a reason to prefer cars with lower emissions. It would make environmental friendliness a selling point.

Then, motorists might find electric cars more appealing. But most consumers probably would still prefer to maintain a well-tuned conventional car. Until carmakers crack the battery problem, all the mandates that California's regulators can dream up will not make electric cars practical or cost-effective. Says Orme of the auto dealers group, "I haven't seen an alternative-fuel vehicle out there yet that beats the good old combustion gasoline engine."

Elizabeth Larson is a REASON *researcher-reporter.*

COURTESY OF GENERAL MOTORS

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

BY BRETIGNE SHAFFER

Two years ago, the towering neon signs that illuminate Nanjing Road were not here. Neither were the phone booths featuring Sprint and USA Direct international service. Careful observers will note that the spitoons that lined the Bund five years ago have been filled in; posters now warn that spitting is socially unacceptable. (A sign just outside the city reads: "Pay Attention to Sanitation; Build Socialist Civilization!") Even the infamous Long Bar—a bastion for foreign journalists throughout the turmoil of pre-1949 Shanghai—is long gone, replaced by the ever-inviting plastic visage of Colonel Sanders.

The Shanghai government is cracking down on the black market in goldfish, along with other illicit commerce.

One of the biggest complaints coming from Shanghai residents these days is that the city is becoming too commercial. "Everyone is too concerned with making money," laments a young university student.

Capitalism is OK again in China, ever since Deng Xiaoping's visit to the southern Special Economic Zones in January. The visit gave official blessing to the economic reform movement and kicked off a wave of pro-reform and open-door rhetoric. Pro-market speeches, articles, and proclamations are more prevalent now than at any time in the last five years.

Actually implementing the rhetoric, however, remains a slow and painful process. While the country's massive bureaucracy is gradually becoming more flexible, particularly in the south, it still presents a formidable obstacle for both locals and foreigners. This is true even in Shanghai, where reformist former Mayor Zhu Rongji decided he would recreate the economic miracle of the south. Greedy bureaucrats, propped up by a pervasive and inefficient system, are chasing away the very investment political leaders seek to revitalize their city.

Shanghai has had a long relationship with parasitic officials. After 1949, the once-bustling commercial center of China was reduced to a cash cow by the central government's policy of directing raw materials to the city's state-owned factories and selling the output at inflated prices. Even in the early 1980s, when China's economic reform movement began, Shanghai was remitting over 90 percent of its municipal revenue to Beijing.

The government was also quick to squash private enterprise. In 1952, three years after the Communists took power, some 350,000 Shanghainese were self-employed. By 1962, that number had dropped to 90,000, and by 1970, it was less than 8,000.

Now that figure is on the rise again. City officials have adopted a more liberal attitude toward small private businesses (with the emphasis on *small*), and official estimates put their number at "over 10,000." The actual figure is probably a lot higher, since much business activity occurs unofficially, on gray or black markets.

Everyone in Shanghai seems to have some business concern going. Students ask if foreigners will sell art for them in Hong Kong, shoe repairmen spread their wares on every other street corner, and small restaurants—often in what appear to be family living rooms—light up the side streets with their own version of Nanjing Road's neon: Christmas-tree lights strung across their entryways.

Service here contrasts sharply with what passed for service in the state-run restaurants that dominated the city a few years ago. These restaurants are open until the wee hours of the morning, and the owners will scramble around in their kitchens to find the nearest match to what the customer wants. This is a far cry from the indifferent "*mei you*" ("there isn't any") that was once widely believed to be the mating call of the city's restaurant staff.

A young waiter in one such restaurant, a slightly refurbished old house, says he makes 250 renminbi ($45.75) a month at his job. But he wears a "Shanghai Hotboy" hairdo that must have cost at least 30 renminbi ($5.49) and is up to date on the latest styles and pop stars from Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Many in the new (more accurately, revived) entrepreneurial class hold down more than one job and have several businesses going. There is no way to estimate average earnings, say observers, since so much income goes unreported.

Residents are also benefiting from the stock exchange, which officially opened a year and a half ago. According to a local investor, one of the most active stocks is that of the Yu Yuan Tea Gardens, a popular tourist attraction. Since its listing in December 1990, Yu Yuan's price has moved from 100 renminbi ($10.30) to 4,000 renminbi ($732) per share. Turnover on the Shanghai Stock Exchange reached nearly $2.3 billion in the first year of trading and had already topped that in the first four months of 1992.

Such growth has officials biting their nails: They live in constant terror of a downswing, and their economic doctrine preaches against instability and "specula-

BRETIGNE SHAFFER

tion." On the other hand, they are well aware that the status they seek for their city demands such trappings as an international-style stock market.

Since April 1990, when Beijing approved plans to develop the 350-square-kilometer Pudong New Area near Shanghai as an investment zone, the central government has committed $6.5 billion to the city. In its drive to recreate the economic miracle of Hong Kong and southern China, the Shanghai government is beginning a massive development of the city's ailing infrastructure and is trying to attract foreign investment to pay for it. The Pudong New Area is supposed to be an investment haven, with incentives such as lower taxes, duty-free importing for materials to be used in export goods, and the right to lease land for up to 70 years.

In a drive to recreate the economic miracle of Hong Kong and southern China, Shanghai officials are trying to attract foreign investment to pay for development of the city's infrastructure.

The incentive package, however, does not offer anything that is not available in other investment zones around the country—many of which already have their own streets. Pudong, which lies across the harbor from the developed city center, can best be described as barren. While a few foreigners, and more locals, have set up shop there, the large-scale investment the government is looking for has not materialized.

There are several reasons for this, not least of which is the city government itself. Foreigners based in Shanghai complain of a class of middle-level bureaucrats who seem to delight in making life difficult for everyone else. Numerous approvals are still required to get anything done, in spite of former Mayor Zhu's claims that his "One-Chop-Shop"—the Shanghai Foreign Investment Commission—would eliminate this problem.

Firing workers remains difficult as well, since the "iron rice bowl" mentality, the idea that the state should provide for all needs, remains fixed in the minds of many officials and workers. Nor has the "cash cow" attitude disappeared. For instance, the city requires representative offices of foreign businesses to hire workers through the official state employment agency at exorbitant pay rates—little of which the employees will ever see.

Foreigners are not the only ones squeezed by local officials. The rise in disposable income provides tempting bait for those with power to abuse, and the growing consumer markets provide plenty of opportunity for them to abuse it. For example, keeping goldfish has become a very popular hobby, and quite a black market has developed in the goldfish trade. Fortunately, the Shanghai government is treating this threat to economic stability with the seriousness that it warrants.

One afternoon, on a street corner near a large public park, a group of more than 100 people were openly trading in goldfish, newts, and what appeared to be minnows. It was not long before a small public-security van sped up, and the group scattered. The police were able to apprehend one of the ringleaders, whom they roughed up before shoving into the van. Security officials continued to round up offenders, until the van was filled with tropical-fish kingpins. The door slammed and then abruptly reopened as a policeman stuck his head out long enough to pull a yellow sunfish from a plastic bag and slam it vindictively onto the pavement before the van sped off again.

A witness says she doesn't know whether the goldfish dealers were operating illegally. "But it doesn't matter," she says. "Even if they get a permit and pay the fee, the police will still arrest them and give them a fine. Our government is also very concerned with making money."

Bretigne Shaffer is a free-lance writer based in Hong Kong.

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WHY THE FROWNS?

BY MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER

One of the books I most enjoyed reading this summer was Richard Band's *Contrary Investing for the '90s*. In the book, Band describes one of his favorite "contrarian" indicators: See what *Business Week* predicts in its cover stories, then invest assuming the exact opposite will happen. When *Business Week* predicts a booming stock market, then it is time to sell short.

I went to the library to put Band's theory to the test. I found that *Business Week* doesn't do as many "trend" covers as it used to, perhaps because of silly predictions like the ones Band cites. But when it did a trend story in 1992, the message was the same: The recession will continue for a long time, and it isn't just a cyclical blip. On March 23, for example, *Business Week*'s cover story was "Downward Mobility"; May 18, "The Economic Crisis of Urban America"; August 10, "The Global Economy: Who Gets Hurt."

As usual, *Business Week* is reflecting the conventional economic wisdom of the time. Current clichés about the economy can be summarized as follows: Deregulation ensured that the highfliers of the 1980s (the investment banker, the savings-and-loan executive, the corporate raider) created mountains of debt that led to the economy's current sorry state. Our basic industries are crippled; the barons of a once-mighty automobile industry groveled in Tokyo before the haughty Japanese. The greedy yuppies of the '80s will be punished for their conspicuous consumption in the '90s; they will have to trade their power suits for hairshirts, and their nightly feasts of Dom Perignon and caviar will be replaced by the beggar's banquet of gruel and cold carrion.

Symbolically, at least, the current recession is something deeper than just another change in the business cycle. Many Americans think that the recession reflects a more serious long-term decline in America's economic and social conditions. The question is why. As *Wall Street Journal* editor Robert Bartley observes in the August *Commentary*, the gloom that has fallen over America comes at an odd time. The Cold War has been won; the United States is the only superpower in the world. But the opinion leaders of America are preaching variations on a theme of defeat, despair, and moral exhaustion.

"How come decline is so much *fun*?" Bartley writes. "What roots make decline so precious that an attempt to bring good news results among some in an outpouring of ill-temper and even anger?"

Symbolically, the recession is deeper than just another change in the business cycle. Many Americans believe it reflects a serious long-term decline for America.

One problem may be that people have an unduly gloomy picture of reality. A survey conducted by *Brand Week* and the New York advertising agency of Warwick, Baker, and Fiore (reported in the June 22 *FutureScan*) asked Americans to give their estimates of social and economic conditions.

When asked, "What percentage of people can be described this way?" respondents suggested that 48 percent of Americans use illegal drugs, 34 percent are homeless, 52 percent have been robbed, mugged, or burglarized, and 35 percent have spent time in jail—all numbers far higher than the actual statistics. (For example, no one knows how many homeless people there are, but even the homeless lobby has never claimed that more than 1 percent of the American population has no place to live.) "If the culture we believe we live in was actually the one we did inhabit," *Brand Week* commented, "we wouldn't need reformers, we'd need exterminators."

But, as Bartley suggests, this notion that America is finished is not just limited to the masses. It also enjoys rising popularity among the intellectuals. The March, May, and August issues of *Commentary* featured a debate on the topic "Is America on the Way Down?" Agreeing with this premise in the March issue was Edward N. Luttwak of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Bartley disagreed.

To understand today's economic realities, Luttwak says, take two taxi rides from airports into the heart of major cities. The passenger who lands at Tokyo's Narita airport arrives in a gleaming, streamlined paradise, with efficient, happy workers eager to provide service. The traveler is then whisked downtown in a spotless taxicab driven by a "neatly dressed driver in white gloves." The passenger landing at New York's John F. Kennedy airport, in contrast, enters a dingy, decaying world full of dirty walls and surly, tip-hungry workers. He will then travel to Manhattan in a filthy bus or "a dirtier and more battered taxi, usually driven by an unkempt lout."

This hellish taxicab ride, says Luttwak, is emblematic of everything that is wrong with American commerce. Falling wages, foreign buyouts, trade deficits, and increasing productivity of European workers, says Luttwak, will ensure that America, by 2020, "will become Japan's Brazil, an amusing, sometimes unsettling country of vast expanses with a cheerful but impoverished third-world population."

For his part, Bartley believes that "the plain fact is that the United States is the wealthiest society in the history of mankind." Part of the reason people assume America is losing the economic

race is that exchange rates falsely exaggerate the differences between national economies; what matters is the "purchasing-power parity"—the amount of goods a currency can buy. Judged by this standard, Americans, by being able to purchase more goods at lower costs, still have the world's highest standard of living; Germany ranks 10th and Japan 12th. Americans, for example, have one car for every 1.8 persons, compared to one car per 2.8 in France and one car per 4.2 in Japan.

Moreover, Bartley argues, trade deficits are no measure of the health of an economy; thriving 19th-century America routinely had trade deficits, while the Smoot-Hawley tariff of 1930 helped bring on the Great Depression—and trade surpluses. America in the 1990s, Bartley contends, should use free trade to lead the free world and pay little attention to "the gloomy apostles of decline, alarmed because goods and services move across lines someone drew on maps, trying to manufacture conflict out of the peaceful and mutually beneficial intercourse among peoples."

The May *Commentary* includes nine responses from think tankers about Luttwak and Bartley's articles. Eight agree with Bartley; only Francis Fukuyama sides with Luttwak. Boston University sociologist Peter L. Berger notes that the preference of most immigrants for the United States shows America's strength, not its decline. He notes that "people don't fall all over themselves in order to clamber aboard a sinking ship."

The American Enterprise Institute's Irwin M. Stelzer reminds Luttwak that New York (thankfully) is not America, and a traveler landing in Orlando, Dallas, or Phoenix would have a more pleasant experience. Moreover, Stelzer observes, the low prices resulting from deregulation and competition ensure that American airports are packed with customers; cartels and state ownership ensure that, for most Europeans, air travel is a luxury limited to the well-to-do. Stelzer's colleague, Ben J. Wattenberg, points out to Luttwak that the cab drivers in New York are not "louts" but entrepreneurs following the American tradition of working hard to make sure their children can climb the social ladder.

The people who side with Bartley in the *Commentary* debate are persuasive. A close examination of economic statistics shows that America has a far sounder economy than proponents of decline claim.

In the April 27 *New Republic*, James J. Cramer shows that American manufacturing is in much better shape than critics believe. Only two parts of the manufacturing sector are in trouble, says Cramer: automobiles and VCRs. The automobile companies, protected by quotas from competition, failed to close obsolete plants and spent far too much money expanding into questionable markets and buying back stock to artificially inflate share prices.

The U.S. electronics industry has shifted from making low-profit items to making high-profit ones; the Japanese and South Koreans may dominate the world television and VCR markets, but such export-oriented U.S. electronics firms as Hewlett-Packard, Intel, and Sun Microsystems make billions selling Europeans and Japanese workstations and microprocessors.

Moreover, American firms dominate other markets: chemicals, wood, paper, pharmaceuticals. Ronald Reagan and Paul Volcker, says Cramer, are responsible for increasing America's economic muscle: Reagan's 1981 crushing of the air-traffic controllers union cleared the way for corporate giants to close uncompetitive plants and eliminate thousands of unproductive middle-management positions. And the devalued dollar let American firms undercut European rivals, enabling Monsanto and DuPont to sell Germans nylon and rayon at a price lower than the German chemical industry could offer.

This competitive edge, says Cramer, gave many American corporations the chance to become global giants and ensures that American industries are far stronger than most pundits claim. "As a stockpicker who bets on the fortunes of American companies," says Cramer, "I can tell you that fears about an uncompetitive America exist more in print than in the marketplace."

American labor, observes Paul Starobin in the April 16 *National Journal*, shows similar unheralded strengths. The Urban Institute reports that the rich in America in 1990 were not the same as those in 1980; people in the United States climb and fall on the income ladder much faster than their European counterparts. In short, observes the Urban Institute's Isabel Sawhill, the cliché that the rich got richer and the poor got poorer in the 1980s is doubly false; the correct notion is that "the poor tend to get richer, and the rich tend to get poorer."

Nor are Americans necessarily overworked. They are able to retire earlier than in the past. In 1950, half of all American men over age 65 were in the labor force; today, under 20 percent are. And while the average number of hours each American works each year is increasing, the increase is "not because people are spending more time on the job, but solely because more women are now working at paid jobs."

Certainly, the American economy is in transition. The middle managers whose jobs consist of conveying information between low and high levels of bureaucracy are no longer necessary. Many big corporations, such as General Electric and Bethlehem Steel, discovered long ago that a lean corporate structure meant increased profits—or, in Bethlehem Steel's case, made the difference between survival and bankruptcy.

But the recession's fundamental lesson is that traditional American values matter. The old virtues of hard work, self-reliance, and independence are still true; the millions of laid-off workers who are forced to become entrepreneurs may well learn that working for yourself makes you happier—and, in some cases, wealthier—than working for someone else.

The recession will end soon. And when it does, we will once again learn that the dynamic, resilient nature of American capitalism ensures that the United States, despite all its problems, remains the most fruitful and productive nation on Earth.

Contributing Editor Martin Morse Wooster is a self-employed writer, editor, and researcher in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Equal Treatment

BY CHARLES MURRAY

The End of Equality, by Mickey Kaus, New York: BasicBooks, 293 pages, $25.00

Mickey Kaus wants to substitute Civic Liberalism for Money Liberalism.

Mickey Kaus is a liberal (I concede the contemporary meaning of *liberal* for the duration of the review) who believes that liberalism took the wrong fork in the 1960s and '70s and has by now become rootless and witless, maundering about "fairness" and "compassion" and "social justice" without thinking clearly about what these concepts mean, for whom, to what ends.

Kaus's conception of the situation is simple and exact, and it constitutes a signal insight for political thinking on the left: Modern liberalism, he says, is driven by opposition to inequality and attempts to mitigate it. But equality has become equated with money equality. "Money Liberalism," as he labels it, tries to mitigate inequality by suppressing the income differences that are part of a successful capitalist economy.

This is foolish, Kaus says. Income differences cannot be appreciably suppressed. The reforms that Money Liberals propose either do not work because the smart folks can figure out how to circumvent them or, worse, do work by killing prosperity. And anyway, what really bothers liberals about American society—or at least bothers Kaus and, for that matter, me—is not that some people drive Mercedes-Benzes while others drive Hyundais but that an egregious social inequality has become part of American culture.

America has always had its rich and its poor, but until the last few decades the great bulk of society was bound together by the assumption of an equality of worth that struck Tocqueville so forcibly back in the 1830s. It was not just that Americans tugged no forelocks, though that was part of it, but that the average farmer or worker thought himself the moral equal of anyone and (crucially important) that the successful also took pride in that credo and behaved in ways that validated it. Today, that social glue has loosened, and America is becoming a class society in unprecedented ways. Kaus wants to restore the old bonds.

If Money Liberalism is not the answer, what is? Kaus calls it "Civic Liberalism," which "pursues social equality directly, through government action, rather than by manipulating the unequal distribution of income." Most of the last seven chapters of the book are devoted to an examination of the specific policies that Civic Liberals might propose.

The most detailed and provocative policy innovation that Kaus proposes is to replace the welfare system with a work system of great simplicity: "an offer of employment for every American citizen who wants it, in a useful public job at a wage slightly below the minimum wage for private sector work," which would replace Aid to Families with Dependent Children, food stamps, public housing, and all other cash-like welfare programs. This is not workfare. There is no nonsense about trying to cajole welfare recipients into work or training programs. Kaus's system "would give you the location of several government job sites. If you show up and work, you get paid for your work. If you don't show up, you don't get paid. Simple."

The point is not to diminish the money inequality that separates welfare recipients from the rest of society (Kaus's system might well increase poverty among current welfare recipients) but to diminish the social inequality. Let welfare recipients have a chance to claim that great unifying basis for social equality in this society, the boast that one is paying one's own way in the world.

I have been thinking about Kaus's plan off and on since he first proposed it in a widely discussed 1986 *New Republic* article. I have many practical objections, because the program doesn't have a prayer of getting implemented correctly. Like every welfare reform we have tried since the 1960s, the final product would be unrecognizably watered down, placating everyone from the government unions, which are rightly scared stiff that high-paying, low-skill government jobs would be lost, to the welfare-rights lobby, which would be screaming for a zillion exceptions for mothers with infants, mothers without a good education, ad infinitum.

But I do not have a politically practicable alternative, so I might as well say it: If Kaus's plan were implemented as is, it would work. He has proposed an authentic solution that would immediately reduce the number of babies born to

DIANA WALKER

low-income single women and, over a not-too-long period of time—a few decades, let us say—drastically reduce the size of the underclass. Moreover, his way of dealing with the underclass is no more offensive to the ideals of limited government than the current system. Both are miles out of bounds, but Kaus's way is much less intrusive and more respectful of personal responsibility than what we have now.

Kaus's other ideas—universal service for young people, tighter restrictions on private campaign contributions, a universal health-care system, day care—are standard parts of the liberal agenda. As the list indicates, Kaus really is a liberal, not a closeted conservative or libertarian. He believes in "affirmative government," he actually hopes that government will play a larger role in our everyday lives, and he exhibits no interest whatsoever in the idea that government should have limits, dammit, that may not be transgressed no matter how good the cause.

In discussing his scheme for mandatory national service, for example, Kaus correctly concludes that it will not work without a penalty for evasion "harsh enough to be coercive," possibly jail, possibly a money fine "that judges could tailor to fit the financial circumstances of any refuseniks"—millions of dollars in some cases. Nowhere in this discussion does he pause to ask how such uses of government can conceivably be squared with the vision that inspired the Founders.

Kaus's analysis of all these policies is useful nonetheless because he approaches them from an unusual and coherent perspective. The point of his ideal health system, for example, is not just to provide good health care for the poor but to create a system in which most Americans end up in the same waiting rooms—part of the "ecology of equality" that he seeks to create. And if that phrase sounds like the smarmy stuff you've been hearing from liberals for years, I can only suggest you read Kaus. He is as sassy as P. J. O'Rourke. (What liberal but Kaus would describe equality as the "veritable G-spot of liberal rhetoric"?) The prose is sometimes jarringly colloquial, but mostly Kaus made me wish I could write like that. If sometimes he is naive—his discussion of what parents will tolerate in government intervention when it comes to their own children sounds like the writing of a man who has no children—he is always smart, turning over possibilities in his mind, thinking of problems with his own ideas, and always ready to try a different slant.

Kaus's solutions are not the main issue in any case, for the crucial part of the dialogue about social policy at this point is to probe the nature of the problem: How is the American idea, or what we have left of it, to survive the kinds of inequality that have not only increased in recent decades but will continue to increase, perhaps accelerate, in the decades to come? As someone who has been working on the same topic from a different angle (this is not an entirely disinterested review), I think Kaus's concern is well-founded. Indeed, in my view Kaus confronts head-on the great challenge facing American democracy at the end of the 20th century: how to resist the forces that are pushing us toward a system in which the masses get bread and circuses while the elite runs their lives for them. *The End of Equality* asks better questions, more bluntly, than any liberal examination of American social policy in years, and it sweeps away a great many silly answers.

Charles Murray is the Bradley Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of Losing Ground *and* In Pursuit.

The Best Years of Our Lives

BY STEPHEN MOORE

The Seven Fat Years: And How to Do It Again, by Robert L. Bartley, New York: The Free Press, 347 pages, $22.95

Robert Bartley must feel like a man who shows up at a solemn funeral in a white tuxedo. While most of the American intelligentsia has been busy saying last rites over the supply-side ideas of the 1980s, Bartley's new book, *The Seven Fat Years*, is a celebration of the prosperity those ideas generated. His book is thus the ultimate in politically incorrect speech. These days, defending the "decade of greed and selfishness" just isn't done in polite company—and certainly not in print.

Robert L. Bartley bucks conventional wisdom by celebrating the '80s.

ROBERT BENTLEY

Not surprisingly, *The Seven Fat Years* hasn't received glowing reviews from the Washington press corps. As John Judis, who reviewed the book for *The Washington Post*, noted with scorn and incredulity: "Bartley actually seeks to repeat rather than repudiate the '80s. He just doesn't understand what's been happening." Judis and other such critics are the same pundits who hysterically warned in 1980 that a Reagan presidency would mean thermonuclear war and that his tax cuts would lead to raging inflation and steady economic decline.

Bartley's book also has not yet surged to the top of the *New York Times* bestseller list, nor is it likely to. Those exalted positions are already cluttered with gloomy chronicles of the 1980s. "What we are seeing in the books that are now selling," says Linda Grey, president of Bantam Books, "is a turnaround from the decade of greed to the denigration of greed."

This explains the endless litany of

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chart-toppers in recent years with titles such as *The Politics of Rich and Poor*, *America: What Went Wrong*, *The Day of Reckoning*, and *Sleepwalking Through the 1980s*. My personal favorite is Barbara Ehrenreich's *The Worst Years of Our Lives: An Outsider's View of the 1980s*. (I don't know, Barbara; you seemed to do all right!) When reading such titles, one has to wonder: Are these people talking about Ethiopia or the United States?

Alas, there is one huge distinction between Bartley's book and all the 1980s-bashing mega-sellers listed above: Bartley's book is nonfiction. In fact, one of the central virtues of *The Seven Fat Years* is that Bartley systematically unmasks every tired myth of the evil and avaricious 1980s. For example:

- No, the poor did not grow poorer. In fact, Census Bureau data show that from 1981 to 1989 the income of the poorest fifth of Americans *rose* by 5.6 percent. In the pre-Reagan era of 1973-1981 the poorest fifth's income fell by 15 percent.
- No, this was not an era of unprecedented greed and selfishness. Bartley reports that "charitable giving grew at 5.1 percent in the 1980s, compared with a rate of 3.5 percent over the previous 25 years. Giving increased faster than jewelry purchases, beauty parlor and health club spending and consumer debt."
- No, the deficit was not a result of Reagan tax cuts. Tax revenues were twice as high in 1989 as in 1980. This was a real increase of roughly $350 billion. Unfortunately, real federal spending climbed by about $500 billion in the Reagan years.
- No, America did not suffer a loss of competitiveness. In the 1980s, America added 18 million new jobs—more than Japan, Germany, and France combined. U.S. manufacturing employment and output expanded at a healthy pace, as did U.S. exports. Real GNP grew by 30 percent and median family income grew by 11 percent.

As Bartley puts it, during the seven fat years—November 1982 through July 1990, to be precise—the United States experienced "a wave of sustained growth, a dynamic outburst of entrepreneurial creativity...and a reassertion of American optimism." And the revolution transcended our borders. On a global scale, during the seven fat years, American-style democratic capitalism flourished in every corner of the globe. Meanwhile, almost every nation in the industrialized world followed America's 1981 lead by chopping marginal tax rates. The leaders of other nations have shown that they don't believe the supply-side revolution in the United States was a tragic mistake.

What makes Robert Bartley's account of the seven fat years so uniquely informative is that he himself played such a vital role in laying the intellectual groundwork for the supply-side ideas—low marginal tax rates, free trade, deregulation, and sound money—that Ronald Reagan embraced and then implemented. As the editorial page editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, Bartley was one of the most influential of the small contingent of supply-siders who burst on to the policy scene in the mid-1970s and permanently changed the way the world thinks about macroeconomics.

There's a big difference between Bartley's book and all the '80s-bashing best sellers: Bartley's book is nonfiction. He systematically unmasks every tired myth of the evil and avaricious '80s.

It isn't stretching things to say that without the almost-daily drumbeat of editorial advice from Bartley and the brain trust of influential supply-side writers he assembled at the *Journal*—including Paul Craig Roberts, Art Laffer, and Jude Wanniski—the supply-side revolution would never have occurred. Bartley's *Wall Street Journal* was the conscience of the Reagan administration, and it tried—too often in vain—to ensure that Reagan officials kept the faith.

THE**BOOK**CASE

The most entertaining chapters of *The Seven Fat Years* are those in which Bartley describes firsthand the genesis of supply-side economic ideas. Bartley chronicles the economic-strategy-session dinners in the late 1970s—with Laffer, Wanniski, et al.—at Michael 1 restaurant in Manhattan. Bartley assures us that: "The Michael 1 seminars did not arise from accidents of personality. They were a product of their time; their roots lay in the economic and intellectual turmoil of the 1970s. For as stagflation of the 1970s had upset the political universe, so it had overturned intellectual orthodoxy."

Whether you agree or disagree with the policies that Bartley, Laffer, and his accomplices espoused, you can't deny that they successfully staged a revolution in macroeconomic policy making. They overturned the neo-Keynesian orthodoxy and replaced it with what became known as Reaganomics.

An obvious question is: If Bartley is right about the "explosion of growth" these ideas and policies unleashed, then why all the grim faces and why the furious Orwellian rewriting of history? Part of the answer is that Americans, and especially the Washington elite, seem to be suffering from a severe case of historical amnesia. "Memory is often merciful," Bartley writes. "We have repressed the 1970s," which he labels "The Malaise Decade."

He is right. No one seems to remember that when Reagan was sworn into office, inflation was raging ahead at a double-digit annual pace, mortgage interest rates had topped 20 percent, there were Soviets marching in Afghanistan, America was at the mercy of OPEC, and roughly one of 10 Americans was out of work.

Within two years, the combination of Paul Volker's slamming the brakes on the money supply at the Federal Reserve and Reagan's income-tax rate cuts, argues Bartlett, had cut the inflation rate in half, lifted the nation out of a miserable recession, and laid the foundation for the longest peacetime economic expansion in history. By the end of the decade, there were no more Soviets, and there was no OPEC to speak of.

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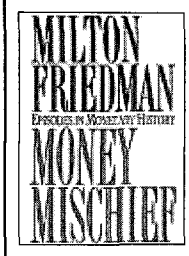

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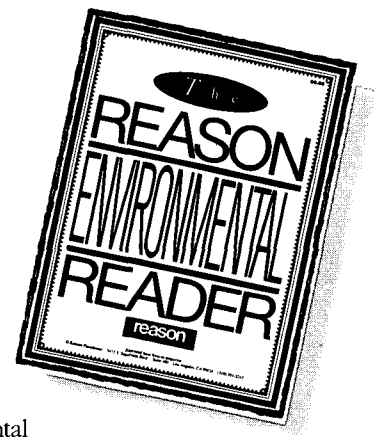

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Yet on college campuses, in the halls of Congress, and within the media these points are mere trifles compared with the "unfairness" of the economic expansion and, of course, the surge in the dreaded deficit. (There was nothing quite like watching liberal Keynesians running around in the 1980s like Chicken Littles, denouncing Reagan for running up "ruinous deficits.")

Indeed, one of the favorite ploys that the revisionists use to denounce Reaganomics is to examine economic statistics from the late 1970s to the late 1980s. The Congressional Budget Office, for example, earlier this year issued a widely cited report entitled *Falling Behind: The Growing Income Gap in America*. The main thrust of the study was that "families in the lowest 40 percent of the income distribution actually had lower real incomes in 1989 than in 1979." The study conveniently lumps in the last two years of the Carter administration with the Reagan years.

What the data really show is that between 1979 and 1981—the Jimmy Carter years—family incomes plummeted by 9 percent. Between 1982 and 1989 family incomes rose 12 percent. In other words, the left has painted a bleak picture of the Reagan era by lumping it together with Carter's truly miserable performance.

Another reason for the 1980s bashing is that Americans cannot seem to stand the thought of prosperity or progress. Maybe it's our Puritan heritage. Just as the slow-growth 1990s are blamed on the excesses of the productive 1980s, Bartley notes, the media and politicians once insisted that the Roaring '20s, a previous gilded age, caused the Great Depression.

Bartley also notes that the media can't seem to resist vilifying successful businessmen. Carnegie, Morgan, Mellon, and Vanderbilt were not successful entrepreneurs, builders of railroads, banks, and steel companies, the historians tell us. Rather, they were "robber barons," whose business empires were established "only in the name of uncontrolled appetite for private profits."

Now, the modern-day empire builders, the Michael Milkens of the world, whose ventures created hundreds of thousands of jobs, are vilified for getting fabulously rich. Their fall from grace is cause for joyous celebration. But as Bartley quite rightly reminds us, with the crumbling of the Berlin Wall, "the world now understands that as an organizing principle, the alternative to self interest is terror." His only lament is that the era in which terror was finally vanquished is called "a decade of greed."

The main shortcoming of *The Seven Fat Years* is that too often its cheerleading for the 1980s glosses over the important policy mistakes of those years. Bartley continues to dismiss the startling rise in the budget deficit as mostly an irrelevancy. But the deficit is important—if only because it is a symptom of the utter failure of the Reaganites to restrain government with the same zeal that they had for cutting taxes.

When Reagan took office, federal spending was 24 percent of GDP. It fell to 22 percent in 1986, the midpoint of the fat years, but it is now up to 25 percent of GDP under George Bush. Some revolution! This rise in government is the primary reason why the fat years ended so abruptly, yet Bartley has little to say about this spending epidemic. This is a general fault of almost all supply-siders—they're soft on spending. Witness the budget build up at HUD under supply-side quarterback Jack Kemp.

Despite its flaws, *The Seven Fat Years* is an excellent book, though not the best on Reaganomics. (That distinction goes to Paul Craig Roberts's *Supply Side Economics*.) Bartley has made a valuable contribution to the debate over the consequences of the Reagan revolution. After reading this book, one can't help feeling that it is not Bartley but his critics who must have been sleepwalking through the 1980s.

Stephen Moore is director of fiscal-policy studies at the Cato Institute.

Recovery Boom

BY CATHY YOUNG

I'm Dysfunctional—You're Dysfunctional, by Wendy Kaminer, New York: Addison-Wesley, 180 pages, $18.95

A couple of years ago, when I knew only vaguely that there was something called codependency and something called the recovery movement, I flipped on the local PBS station one night to see a benign-looking man telling a rapt audience that we were all victims of dysfunctional families. Our parents abused us whenever they stopped us from doing something we wanted to do (like the time Mom wouldn't let me dress up the neighbors' dog) or scolded us for something we had done, thus "shaming" us and repressing our true selves, which live as wounded children within. This was John Bradshaw, a leading guru of recovery—an amorphous movement that advocates the "12-step" model of Alcoholics Anonymous as a cure for all of life's problems.

Many Americans, at least those who aren't regular watchers of Phil and Oprah, might still think that a codependent is someone you list on your tax return and being in recovery means that you've had an operation. But unbeknownst to them, the movement is exerting an often subtle influence on popular culture. People casually talk about excessive shopping or promiscuous sex as addictions. Best-seller lists sport how-to books such as *Codependent No More*, or, for the supposedly more discerning reader, Gloria Steinem's *Revolution From Within: A Book of Self-Esteem*. Celebrity memoirs with their revelations about "toxic" parents—Patti Davis comes to mind—are also written in the language of recovery.

But here comes an unusual best seller: *I'm Dysfunctional—You're Dysfunctional*, by lawyer and social critic Wendy Kaminer, a withering look at the

recovery and codependency fads sweeping America. It would be hard to write a book about the phenomenon that would not be funny, given the movement's propensity for jargon—a good relationship, according to Bradshaw, is based on "the equality of two self-actualizing spiritual beings who connect at the level of their beingness"—and dense metaphors that sound deep while signifying nothing: "Most men have to make that journey to find the lover that only lives within." Just take the names of some support groups: "Children of Bisexual Parents Who Smoke Anonymous." (Is it the parents who smoke, or the children? Clarity is not a forte of the recovery crowd.) For a writer of Kaminer's pithy wit and down-to-earth analytical mind, the subject is irresistible.

One curious thing about the recovery movement is that while it uses the self-help label, it is really not about helping oneself but about seeking help through submersion in a crowd. "The putative message of codependency literature—that we are responsible for ourselves and shouldn't spend our lives pleasing or heeding others—is undermined by the medium in which it is conveyed," Kaminer observes. Members of support groups are supposed to be expressing their innermost selves, but they all sound alike, talking in the same psychobabble.

And while the ostensible purpose of recovery is to turn "adult children" into fully mature adults, it is hard to see its techniques as anything but infantilizing: hugging teddy bears, writing love letters to one's "inner child," and the like. Recovery literature actually warns people with "addictive" habits—ranging indiscriminately from alcoholism to hair twirling—against trying to cope with these problems on their own: "A belief in self-control is a symptom of codependency and 'the perfectionist complex.' "

What exactly is codependency? According to pop feminist Anne Wilson Schaef, it's "a disease process whose assumptions, beliefs, and lack of spiritual awareness lead to a process of nonliving which is progressive." Another best-selling exponent of the modern self-help genre, Melody Beattie, tells us that a codependent is anyone who allows her/himself to be affected by others' behavior. No wonder the disease is said to be ravaging no less than 96 percent of all Americans. The remaining 4 percent must be hermits or sociopaths.

Recovery could be seen as an amusing pastime of affluent neurotics, harmful only to their pocketbooks. (People pay hundreds of dollars to attend workshops where they tell each other how wonderful and lovable they are. In one workshop attended by Kaminer, a woman complained that this "affirmation" from a total stranger didn't mean much, only to be told by the expert on hand that "this is a typical codependent response, indicative of

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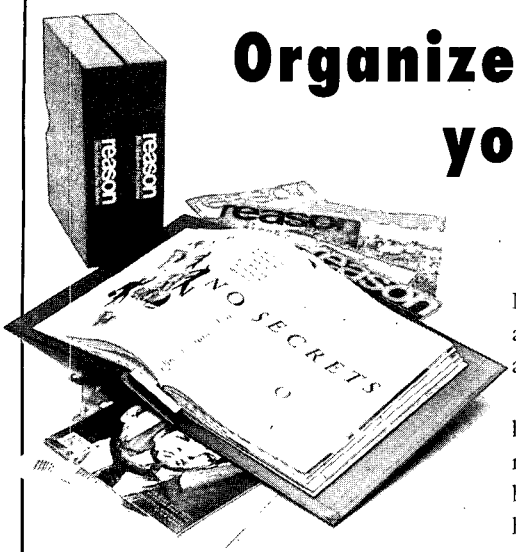

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low self-esteem.") Kaminer believes, however, that this spreading craze is contributing to some dangerous tendencies in American society.

One is the victimization explosion, with the attendant turning away from personal responsibility. About 30 years ago, Ayn Rand lambasted some professor for pronouncing that the true heroes for our age were not the great thinkers or achievers but the great victims—Anne Frank rather than Albert Einstein. Perhaps the

While the ostensible purpose of recovery is to turn "adult children" into fully mature adults, it is hard to see its techniques as anything but infantilizing: hugging teddy bears, writing love letters to one's "inner child," etc.

message has hit home, and codependency is some people's way of measuring up: When spanking is compared to the Holocaust, every middle-class American can be an Anne Frank.

Kaminer contrasts the "abuse" suffered by most recoverers with the stories of real survivors—Cambodian refugee women who were beaten, raped, or tortured by the Khmer Rouge, who watched their entire families slaughtered. Ironically, these women don't seem to revel in their victimhood: "There is more laughter and lightness in these meetings of vulnerable, impoverished survivors of genocide than in any twelve-step group I've attended, where people pursue recovery with deadening earnestness." Kaminer is not suggesting that "all lesser degrees of suffering" are not worthy of consideration, only that they should be viewed in perspective.

Another danger Kaminer sees in the recovery craze is the glorification of irrationality. It is truly refreshing to find a writer who bluntly declares that all the

talk about our culture's excessive rationalism is so much bunk: "Am I the only person who thinks we've gone crazy?...I never feel surrounded by rationality." Members of 12-step groups are urged to think with their hearts, not with their heads; men's movement gurus in particular bemoan the fact that men in our culture are encouraged to be too cerebral. Kaminer notes, "If you want to denigrate thinking, call it intellectualizing. If you want to elevate thoughtlessness, call it experiencing at a feeling level." She sums up the basic message of much recovery and New Age literature as "in nonsense lies salvation." If that's the case, salvation should be near.

Kaminer traces the history of self-help and personal development philosophies in America, from 19th-century revivalism and Christian Science to Norman Vincent Peale's "positive thinking," and looks at such specialized markets as religious recovery literature and the men's consciousness movement. Interestingly, she has little to say about feminist recovery literature, which has had its own share of inanities (in Steinem's aforementioned tome, wars, dictatorships, and massacres are traced back to the abuse that the likes of Saddam Hussein and Nicolae Ceaucescu suffered as children).

This omission may betray Kaminer's own political biases, which also surface in her analysis of the "victim syndrome" and its origins. Kaminer notes that "feminism and the civil rights movement underscored the historic victimization of women and minority males, demanding change that eventually made some white males feel like victims too." She dwells extensively on the men's movement with its frequently ludicrous claims of victimization for middle-class men and cites the Tawana Brawley case as an instance of the exploitation of victimhood by racial minorities; but what about similar exploitation by feminists? When some feminists tell us that ogling is almost the same as rape, aren't they, too, egregiously guilty of ignoring differences in degrees of suffering?

I am also somewhat disturbed by Kaminer's suggestion that a focus on personal development unduly diverts attention from problems that are due to "social injustice." She ties the recovery movement to the narcissism allegedly encouraged by Ronald Reagan and seems to lump navel-fixated 12-step devotees together with conservative critics of the welfare state.

But to say that many problems of the underclass have something to do with personal behavior is not to imply that the poor could improve their situation if they only started corresponding with their inner children. Furthermore, while Kaminer seems to fault the recovery movement for being too apolitical, she ignores the widespread political uses of its metaphors: the contention that the vast majority of conventional families are "toxic" and "dysfunctional" easily be-

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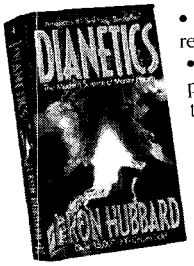

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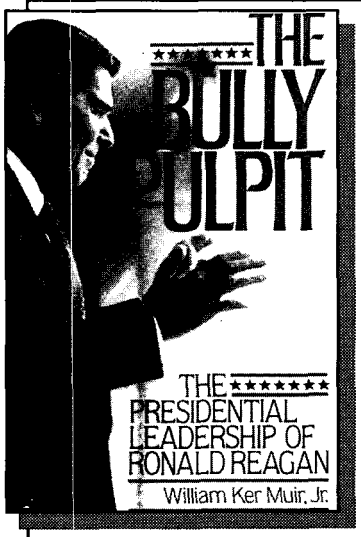

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comes, in the hands of radical academics, an attack on bourgeois society.

Kaminer is no libertarian, but she is no anti-individualist either, unless individualism is equated with self-absorption. Besides, specific social policy is not really the point. Can any sane person disagree with Kaminer's assertion that urging people to surrender to a higher power (embodied, perhaps, in a humble expert) and to stop using their heads so much has its political and social dangers?

Kaminer is not unduly pessimistic. She concedes that recovery may have value for some people ("we're all better off if self-proclaimed addicts consume only books") and that our society is in no danger of collapsing under the weight of the codependency obsession. American democracy and freedom will survive this latest self-help fad—but probably not unscathed.

Contributing Editor Cathy Young is a writer living in Middletown, New Jersey.

Our Right to Drugs: The Case for a Free Market, by Thomas Szasz, New York: Praeger, 199 pages, $19.95. Looking through Thomas Szasz's new book on drug policy, you may be surprised to find a chapter subtitled, "The Lie of Legalization." Rest assured that the iconoclastic psychiatrist has not been won over by the drug warriors. Rather, he is making an important point in a characteristically provocative way: The term *legalization* implies that people need permission from the government to ingest certain chemicals. But in a free society the government cannot grant rights or legislate permission; it can only enact and repeal prohibitions.

This is not merely a semantic issue. As Szasz notes, most of those who favor "legalization" are actually pushing only for modification of the many regulations controlling drug use. They usually do not even address the issue of mandatory prescription. The central insight of *Our Right to Drugs* is that laws pertaining to cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and other recreational drugs should be viewed in the context of a legal system that bans self-

medication and gives a favored few the authority to control access to a host of useful substances.

Although *Our Right to Drugs* overlaps somewhat with Szasz's 1973 book, *Ceremonial Chemistry* (which explored the symbolic significance of drug users as scapegoats), its focus is more legal and philosophical than anthropological or sociological. Szasz explains how Americans, early in this century, gradually lost the right of self-medication. He examines the implications of this profound change in the legal approach to drugs. "If given a choice between the freedom to choose what to ingest and what politician to vote for, few if any would pick the latter," he writes. Yet most Americans would rank voting as among their most important rights while not even recognizing a right to use drugs.

Szasz discusses the drug laws in stark terms, exposing their essence. His style, as usual, is unapologetically polemical, often sarcastic. But Szasz is not simply taking cheap swipes at drug warriors. There is always a deeper point, especially when he probes the use and abuse of language.

For example, Szasz notes that tens of thousands of people are injured and killed each year by various kinds of equipment. "Why do we not speak of 'ski abuse' or a 'chain saw problem?' " he asks, and then suggests an answer: We adapt to the risks associated with skis and chain saws, rather than trying to eliminate them.

Szasz is similarly incisive in his discussion of mandatory drug treatment: "We do not call convicts 'consumers of prison services,' or conscripts 'consumers of military services'; but we call committed mental patients 'consumers of mental health services,' and paroled addicts 'consumers of drug treatment services.' We might as well call drug traffickers—conscripted by the former drug czar William Bennett for beheading—'consumers of guillotine services.' "

Writing like this is not likely to convert any drug warriors, but it should stimulate discussion among the undecided. And for those who already agree with Szasz, it's certainly fun to read.

—Jacob Sullum

If you agree with Robert Hutchins...

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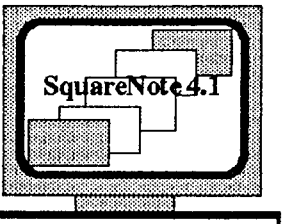

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PEEP SHOWS

BY THOMAS W. HAZLETT

Psst. I'm going to have to whisper this: I like to watch politics. That's why every four years, starting in 1980, I've secured a press pass and waddled off to both major-party conventions (missing only the 1988 GOP Con).

Big-time presidential politics in America encompasses the gravity of human survival with the ethics of professional wrestling; it's twisted just thinking about it. The national conventions allow one to press one's nose right up against the glass. It's *steamy* in there. And I love it.

Like any subculture, the political world has its own logic and language. Each press release, policy statement, or candidate's speech is communicated in a PoliticoSpeak that serves to push five basic ideas: 1) My motives are pure; 2) I care about you; 3) my record is pristine yet effective; 4) my program is no-nonsense yet visionary; 5) my opponent is a slimeball. Squeezing events tangential to the real world into cute sound-bite formats and, in turn, getting those pithy messages into voters' brainwaves is the object of any democratic campaign in the Free World.

This political contest is scored like Olympic boxing: Points are awarded for the number of blows; the underlying importance of each blow (unless it is a knockout punch ending the bout) is irrelevant. As is the truth. Take, for instance, the Bill Clinton attack on George Bush for claiming Texas—rather than Maine or Washington, D.C.—as his home state: Clinton branded Bush a Tax Dodger. This seems to score PoliticoSpeak No. 5 rather nicely.

The GOP response was: No way. Bush has lived and worked in his beloved adopted state of Texas for 30 years, and he feels a supreme sense of loyalty in calling it home. He would never abandon it. Never. And besides, the Bushes pay a wad in taxes—and have never dodged *their* patriotic duties.

This is the genre of fisticuffs that forms the heart of presidential campaigns. Punch! Counterpunch! Pow! Spin! Pow! Spin! The truth? No one can doubt that the reasons George Bush claims Texas as his home state are solely *political*: If the electoral-vote totals of Maine and Texas were reversed, the president's residential P.O. box would gladly sport the zip code of Kennebunkport. To think that saving a couple of thousand dollars is more important to the Bush household than being president of the United States is absurd. Neither campaign seriously believes that.

What is interesting is that while Clinton's sound-bite attack could not tell the truth—"Tax Dodger!" motivates voters in a way that "Vote Seeker!" does not—neither could Bush's nine-second response: Candidates must care about you, not about their chances.

Every campaign understands the PoliticoSpeak game of reducing metaphysics to bumper stickers, but some campaigns are mystified by the scoring. These are the most fun to watch. I remember viewing the Democrats in Atlanta in 1988, abuzz with the electricity of victory. Their closing-night party excited more hormones than a Rob Lowe video. They blasted off to sound-bite their way to the White House.

Well, the GOP was waiting with some brain skimmers of its own. When the Willie Horton ad finally appeared (it had been broadcast since June that the furloughed life prisoner would be the focus of a Bush attack on the Liberal Governor of the Liberal State of Massachusetts), the Cambridge intellectuals managing the Democratic standard-bearer swung into action. They called a major press conference and denounced the ad (which did not show Horton or otherwise describe his background) as racist on the grounds that the rapist-murderer was of African ancestry.

Let us consider the dueling simplifications. The Republican campaign, in an effort to brand Dukakis as an out-of-touch elitist more interested in liberal academic theories than the problems of everyday Americans, cast its opponent as one who lets convicted murderers out of jail to rape and assault innocent civilians. The Democratic response was to belittle the Republicans for making such a big deal about one specific act of terror, which in any event carried racial overtones. Dukakis's folks Harvard twits? Gotcha!

For all the media hand wringing over sound-bite politics, the reduction of huge policy issues to succinct (trivial?) morality blips is blithely engaged in by the journalists, commentators, columnists, talk-show hosts, and policy wonks who dot the media dial. Whenever I see a story in the mainstream news media about an issue I really know the details on—say, cable-TV reregulation—I find even the best daily journalism appallingly simplistic. The stories virtually ignore the key consumer issues, instead presenting a two-dimensional conflict between (Naderite) proregulation and (Reaganite) antiregulation forces. I'd go on to explain, but even *you* would probably prefer the 15-second version.

While photo ops and sound bites seem to have offended today's esteemed media functionaries, ribbon cuttings and gala political pageants have been with us since the pyramids. Slicing complex issues into edible bite-sized morsels is the necessary task of political discourse; butchering that simplification process for partisan advantage is the busywork of politics.

I don't really know if it's the violence of the meat grinder, the public display of something nasty, or just the thrill of the gore going splat! that makes watching this stuff so titillating. But here I am: off to the Astrodome. Damned if I didn't forget my raincoat.

Contributing Editor Thomas W. Hazlett teaches economics and public policy at the University of California, Davis.

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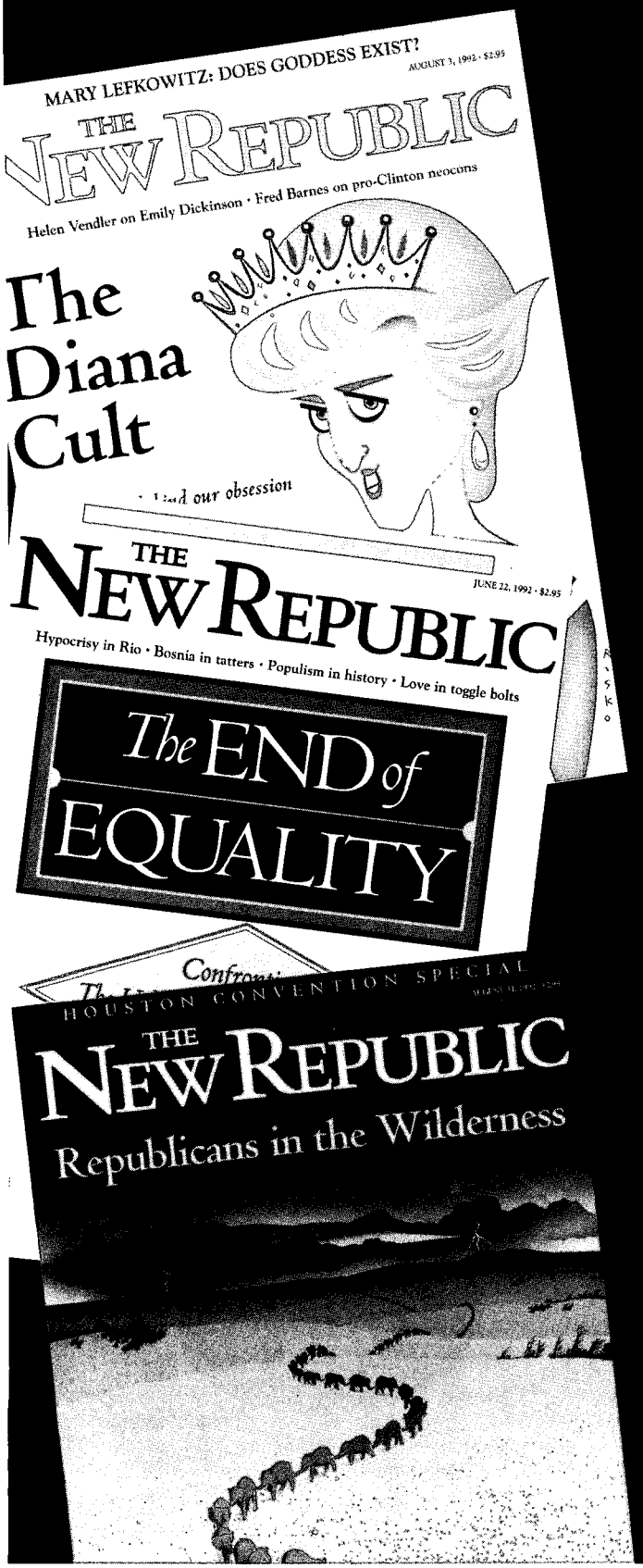
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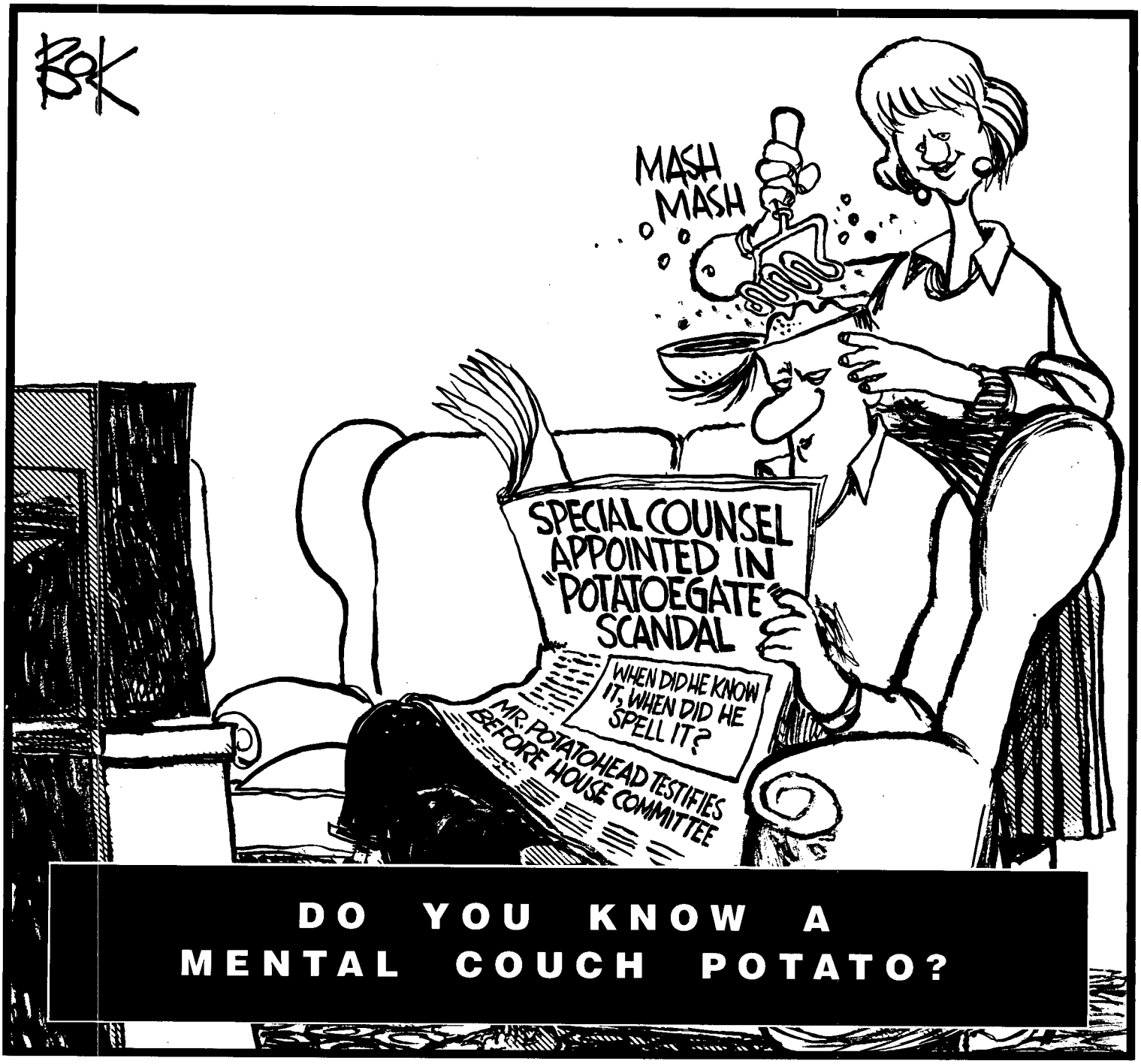
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